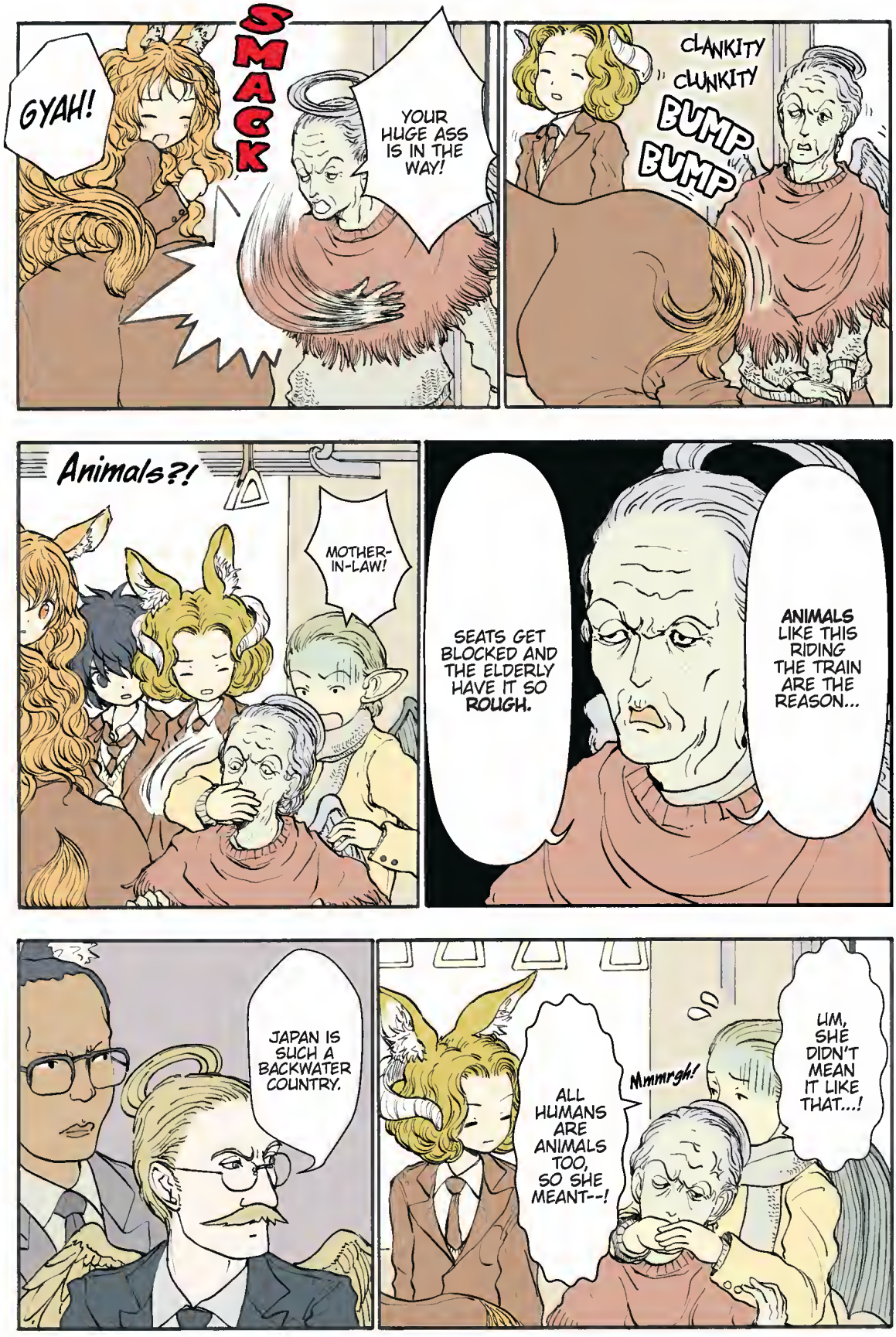
# A CentaUr's Life

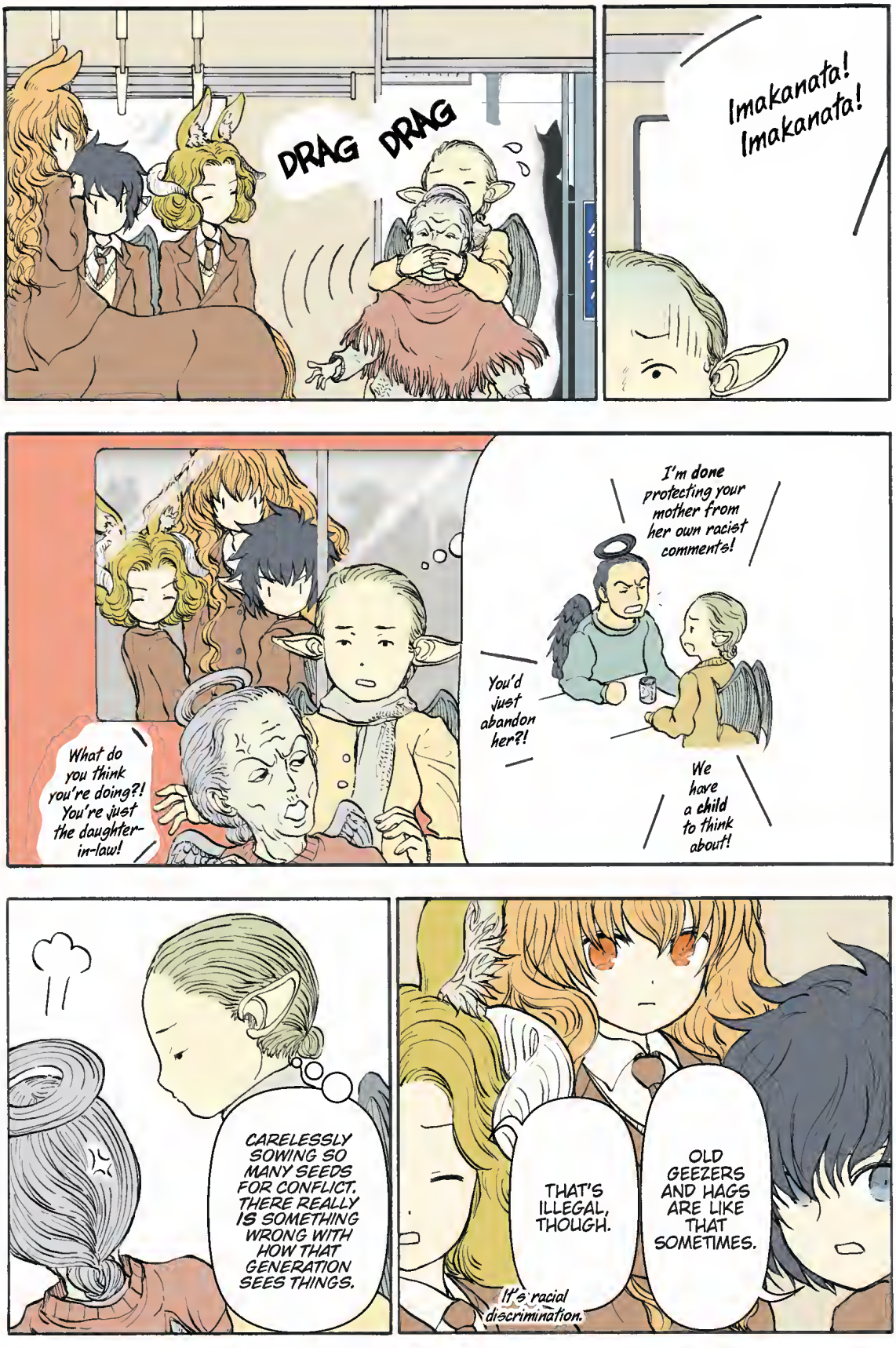
story & art

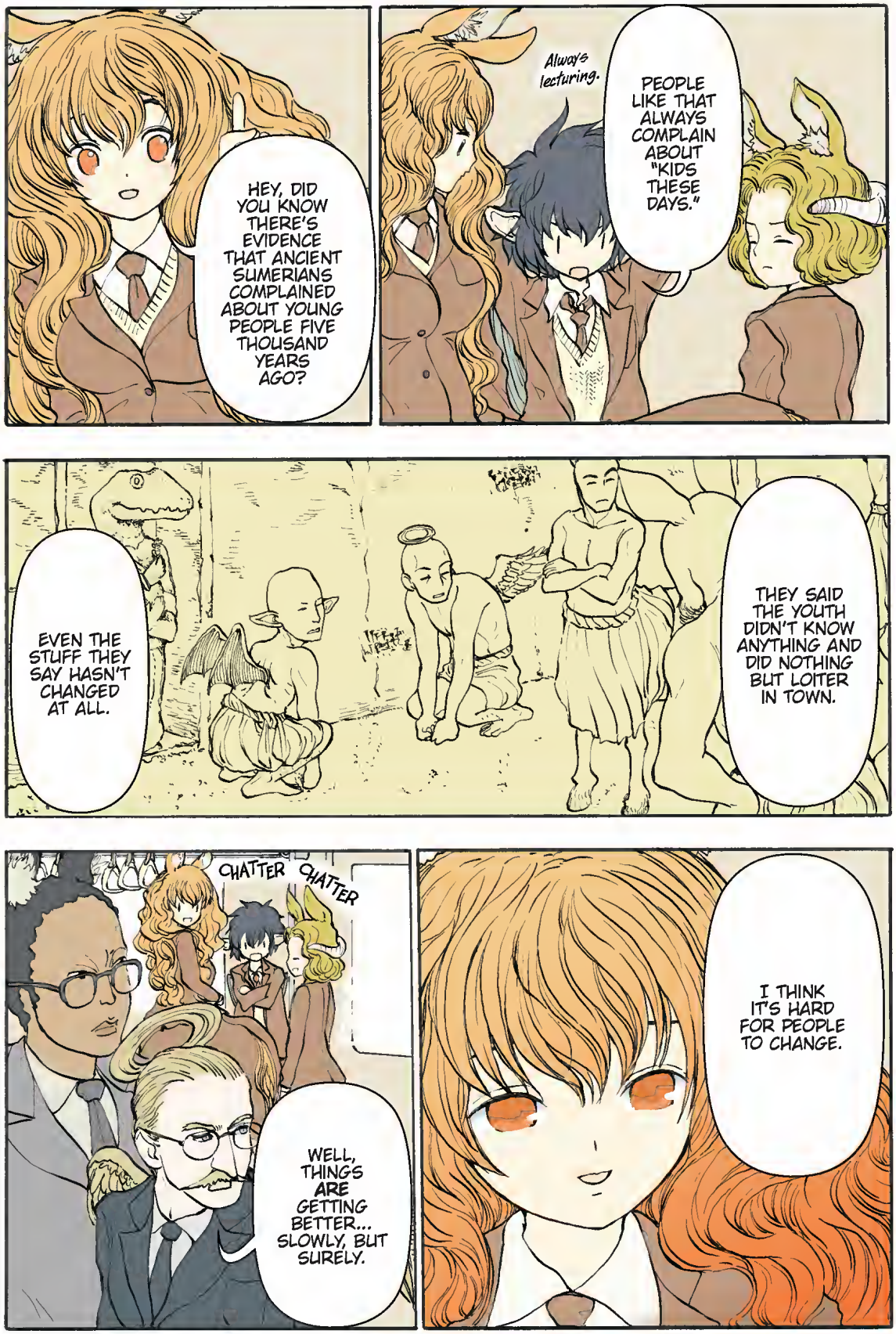
KEI MURAYAMA

5

# CHAPTER 21


GYAH!
SMACK
YOUR HUGE ASS IS IN THE WAY!
CLANKITY CLUNKITY
BUMP BUMP
Animals?!
MOTHER-IN-LAW!
SEATS GET BLOCKED AND THE ELDERLY HAVE IT SO ROUGH.
ANIMALS LIKE THIS RIDING THE TRAIN ARE THE REASON...
JAPAN IS SUCH A BACKWATER COUNTRY.
ALL HUMANS ARE ANIMALS TOO, SO SHE MEANT--!
Mmmrgh!
UM, SHE DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT...!


DRAG DRAG
Imakanata! Imakanata!
What do you think you're doing?! You're just the daughter-in-law!
I'm done protecting your mother from her own racist comments!
You'd just abandon her?!
We have a child to think about!
CARELESSLY SOWING SO MANY SEEDS FOR CONFLICT. THERE REALLY IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HOW THAT GENERATION SEES THINGS.
THAT'S ILLEGAL, THOUGH.
OLD GEEZERS AND HAGS ARE LIKE THAT SOMETIMES.
It's racial discrimination.


HEY, DID YOU KNOW THERE'S EVIDENCE THAT ANCIENT SUMERIANS COMPLAINED ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO?
Always lecturing.
PEOPLE LIKE THAT ALWAYS COMPLAIN ABOUT "KIDS THESE DAYS."
EVEN THE STUFF THEY SAY HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
THEY SAID THE YOUTH DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING AND DID NOTHING BUT LOITER IN TOWN.
CHATTER CHATTER
WELL, THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER... SLOWLY, BUT SURELY.
I THINK IT'S HARD FOR PEOPLE TO CHANGE.

# A CentaUr's Life

Vol. 5

story & art

KEI MURAYAMA

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

# A Centaur's Life

story and art by KEI MURAYAMA

VOLUME 5


TRANSLATION
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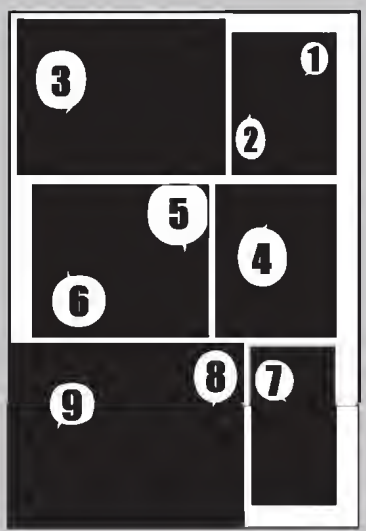
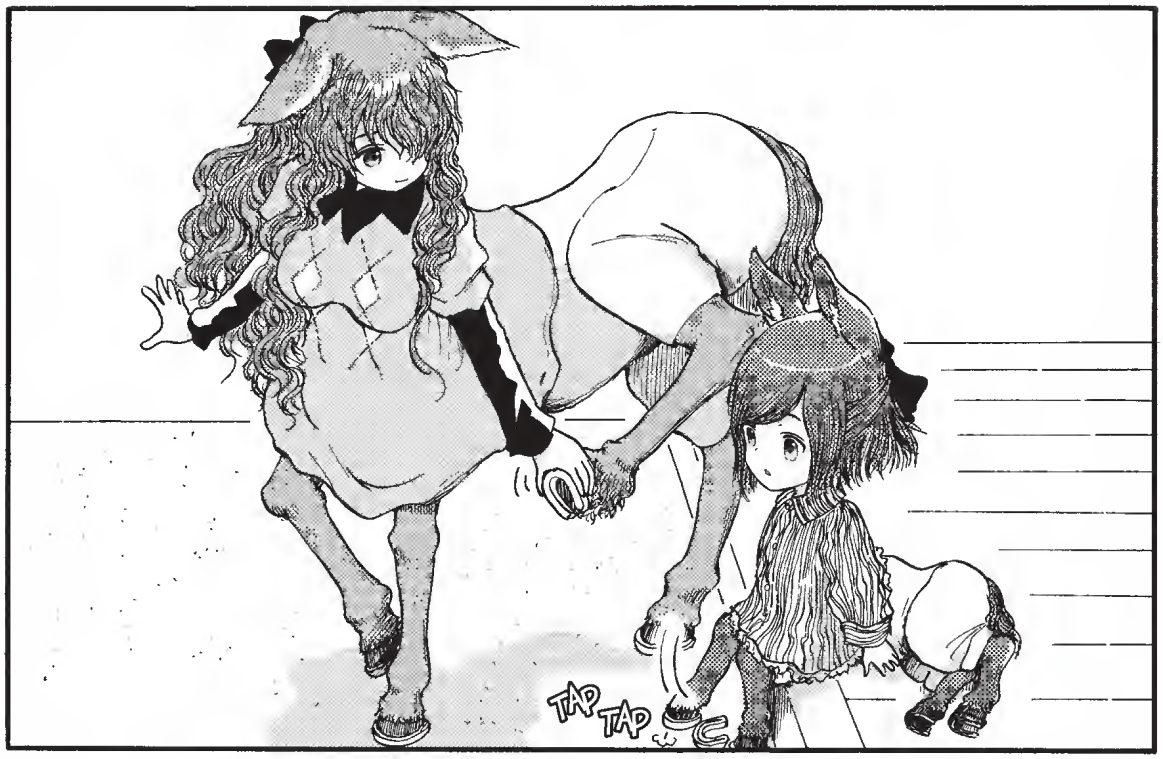
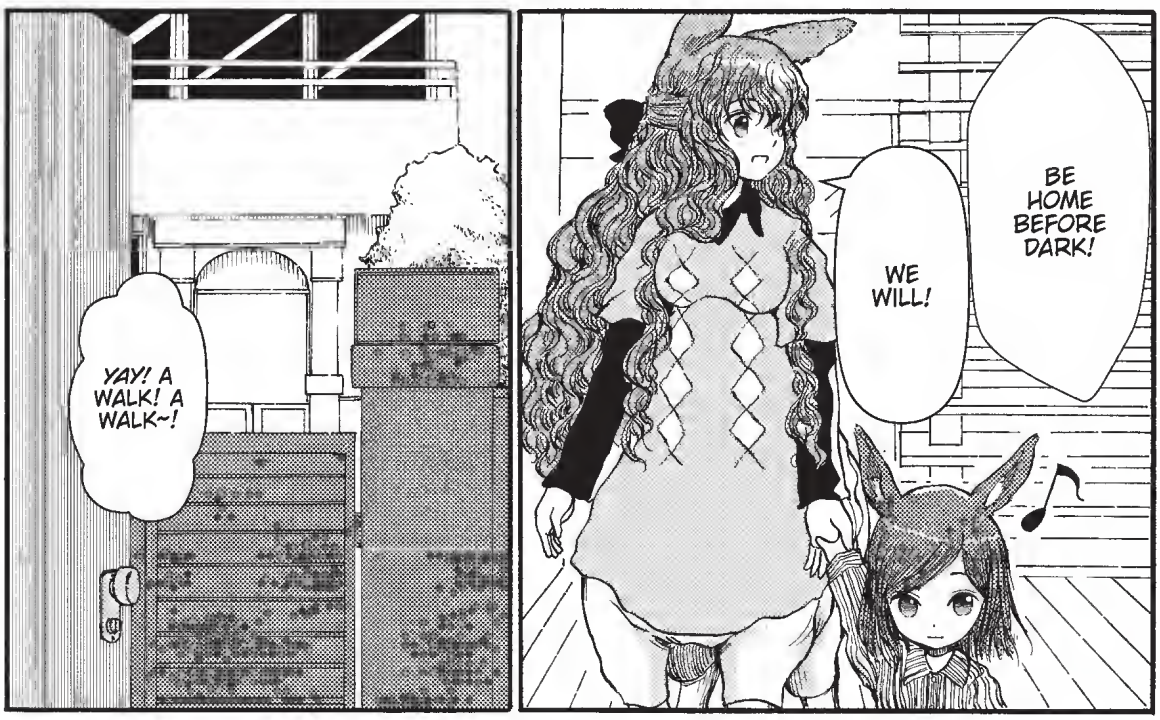
## READING DIRECTIONS

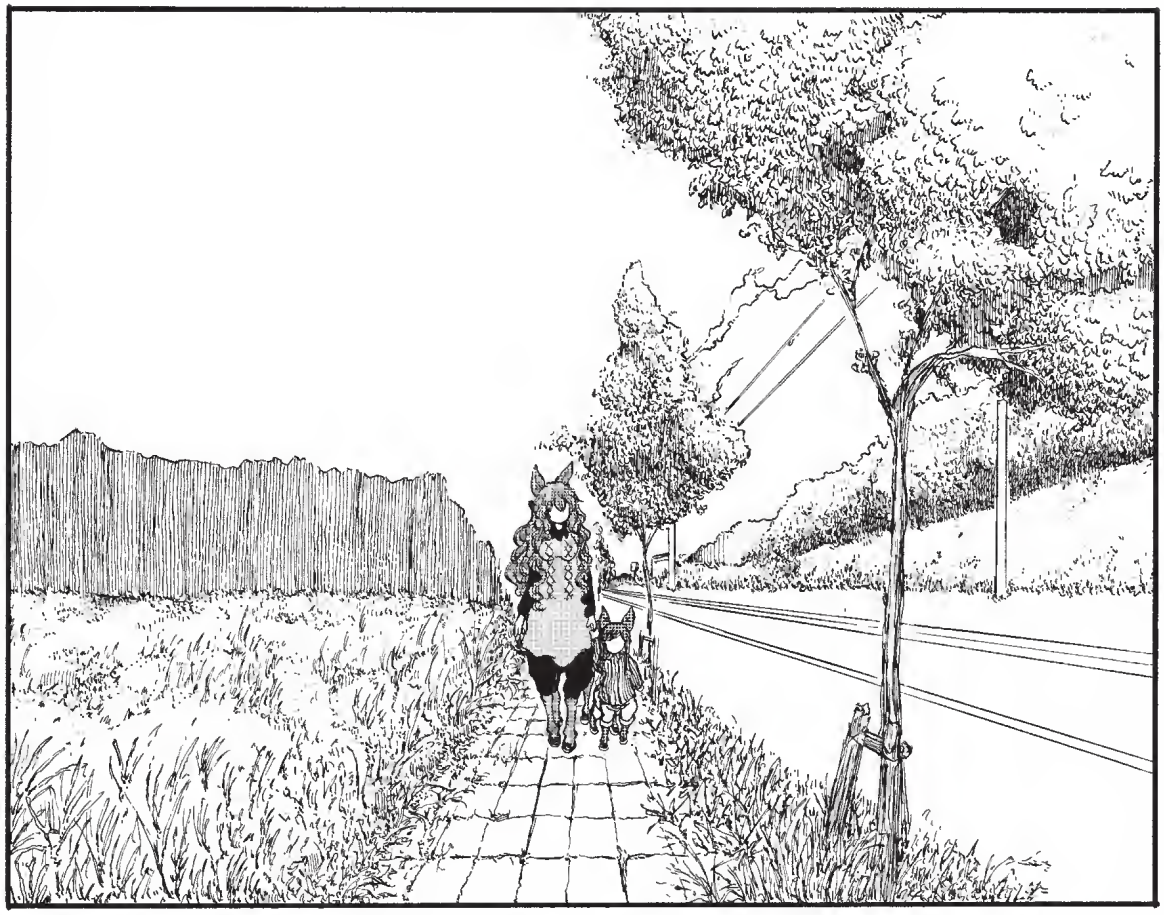
This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!

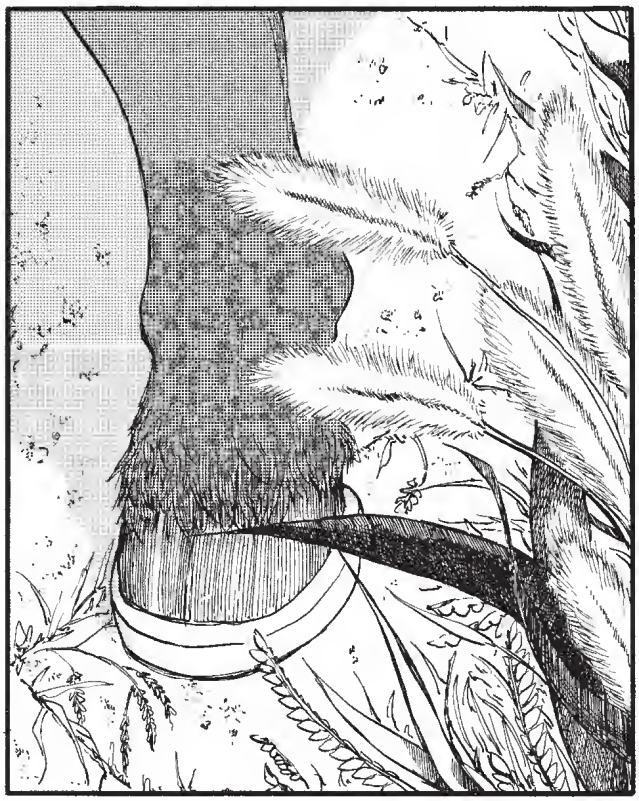





# CHAPTER 22



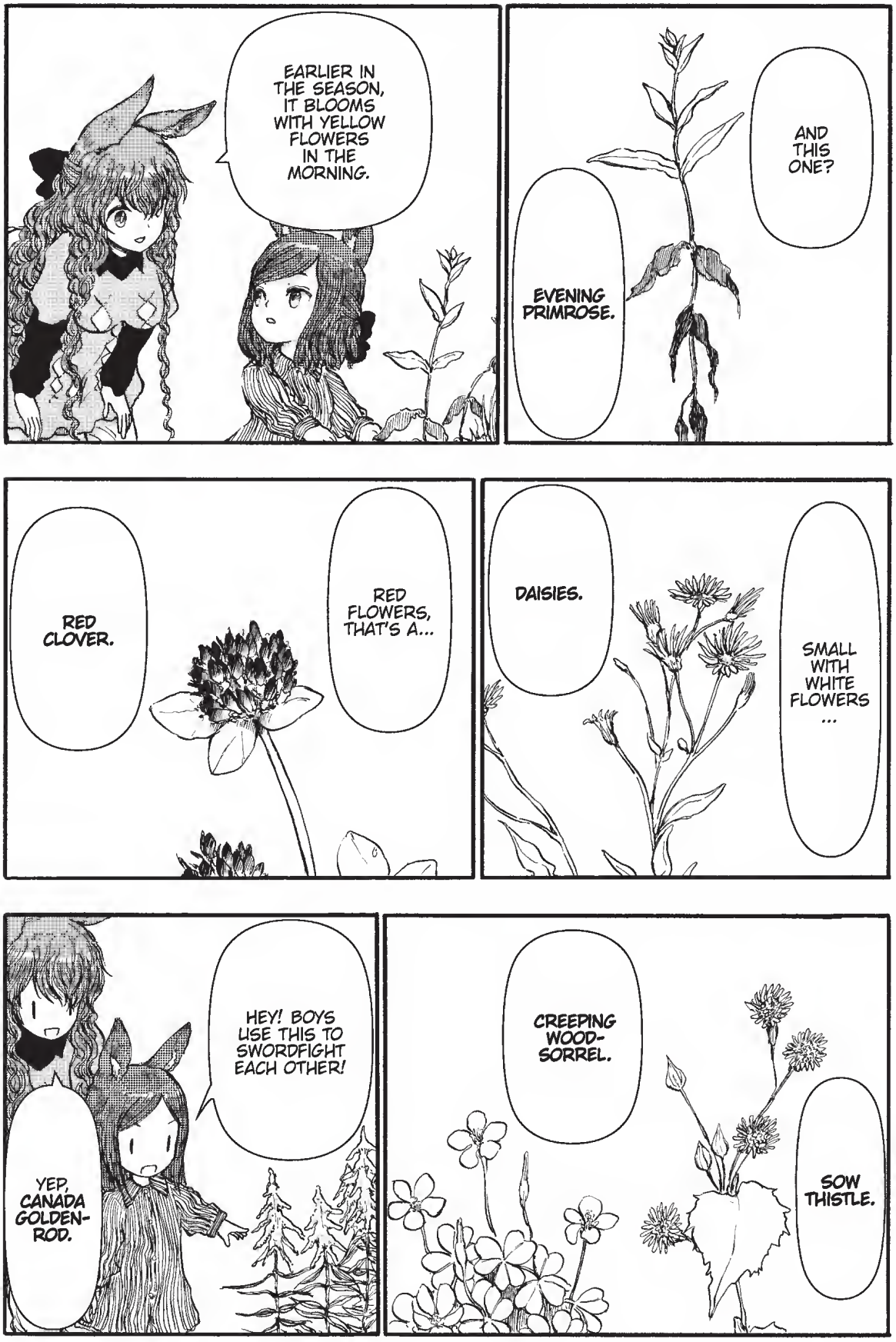


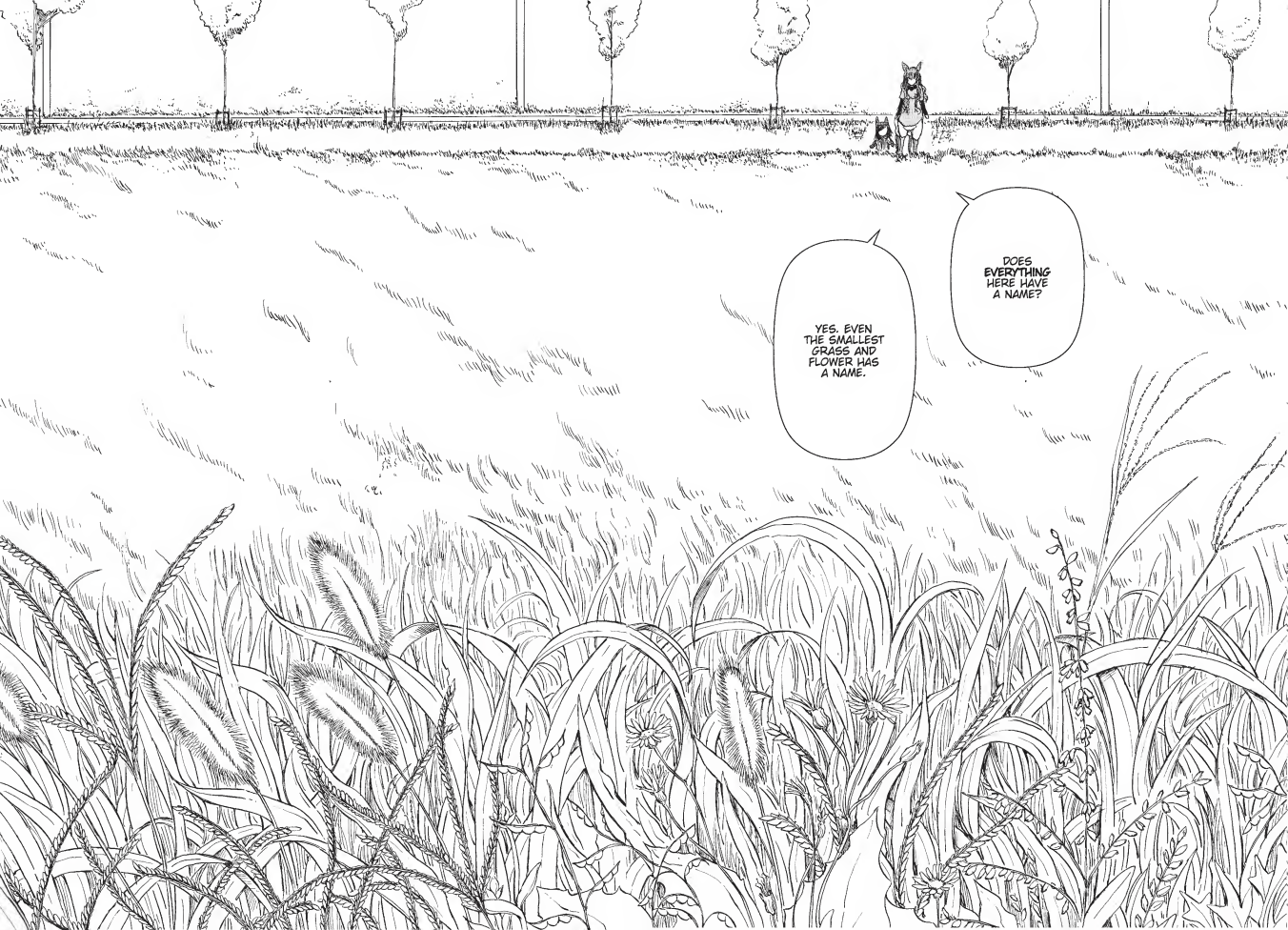


RUSTLE

THERE'S A LOT OF GRASS!
YES, THERE IS.
BIG SIS! BIG SIS!
NO, IT'S NOT.
IS ALL GRASS THE SAME?
WILD GRASSES HAVE THEIR OWN PROPER NAMES.

OH, THAT'S BRISTLE-GRASS.
WHAT'S THIS FLUFFY ONE?
Bristlegrass...
AND THAT CHANGED TO BRISTLE-GRASS.
IT KIND OF LOOKS LIKE A PUPPY'S TAIL, SO IT WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED DOGTAIL.
CRAB-GRASS.
WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE?


EARLIER IN THE SEASON, IT BLOOMS WITH YELLOW FLOWERS IN THE MORNING.
AND THIS ONE?
EVENING PRIMROSE.
RED CLOVER.
RED FLOWERS, THAT'S A...
DAISIES.
SMALL WITH WHITE FLOWERS ...
HEY! BOYS USE THIS TO SWORDFIGHT EACH OTHER!
YEP, CANADA GOLDEN-ROD.
CREEPING WOOD-SORREL.
SOW THISTLE.


DOES EVERYTHING HERE HAVE A NAME?
YES. EVEN THE SMALLEST GRASS AND FLOWER HAS A NAME.

REALLY?!
IF YOU FIND ONE THAT DOESN'T HAVE A NAME, YOU GET TO NAME IT, SHINO.
WELL, THERE MIGHT BE A FEW THAT STILL DON'T.
DO THEY REALLY ALL HAVE NAMES?
HERE YOU GO. THIS IS THE BOOK WITH NAMES OF GRASS.
LUG
WE'RE HOME~!
THEN, THEN, I'LL NAME IT AFTER BIG SISTER, MOMMY, AND DADDY!
THEN, AUNTIE, UNCLE, GRANDPA, GRANDMA, AND MAKI-CHAN!
THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF NAMES AND A LOT OF KANJI!
YUP... THAT THERE ARE.
Ummph!
Nngh!

A CentaUr's Life

# MESOZOIC CREATURES

## DINOSAURS & THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: THE DAWN OF THE AGE OF DINOSAURS

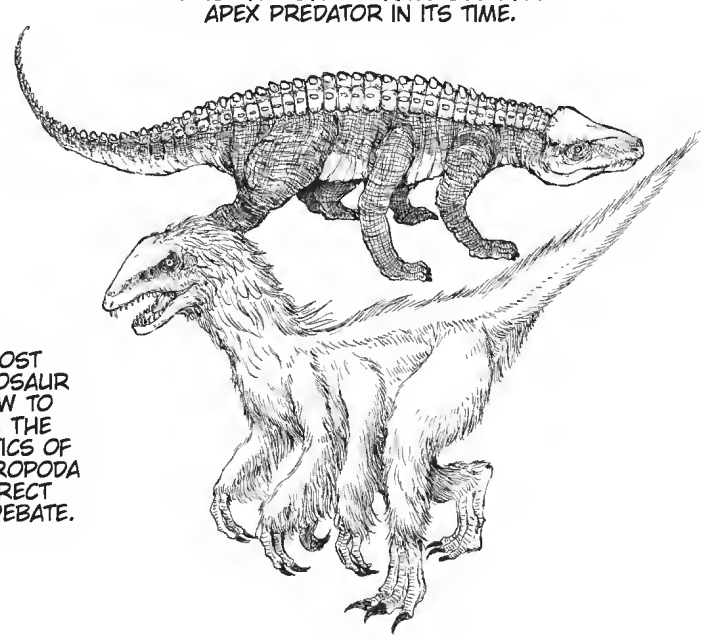
WHEN IT COMES TO MUSEUM EXHIBITS, DINOSAURS ARE ALWAYS INCREDIBLY POPULAR. THOSE MONSTROUS MONOLITHS OF RESTORED BONE HAVE ALWAYS GENERATED TREMENDOUS INTEREST. BUT JUST WHAT KINDS OF CREATURES WERE THESE DINOSAURS, ANYWAY? AND HOW DID THEY DIFFER FROM THE REPTILES WE SEE TODAY?

DINOSAURS WERE CREATURES THAT LIVED DURING THE MESOZOIC ERA (APPROXIMATELY 252 MILLION TO 66 MILLION YEARS AGO) AND WERE MEMBERS OF THE SAME GROUP OF ANIMALS AS LIZARDS, CROCODILES, AND BIRDS, KNOWN AS *DIAPSIDS*. (INCIDENTALLY, MAMMALS EVOLVED FROM A SEPARATE GROUP KNOWN AS *SYNAPSIDS*. THUS, DINOSAURS ARE NOT OUR ANCESTORS.)

ON THE GEOLOGICAL TIMESCALE, THE MESOZOIC ERA INCLUDES--FROM EARLIEST TO LATEST--THE TRIASSIC, JURASSIC, AND CRETACEOUS PERIODS. THE EARLIEST DINOSAURS APPEARED IN THE FORM OF ERECT-WALKING BIPEDS DURING THE MIDDLE TRIASSIC. SO WHAT KIND OF TIME PERIOD *WAS* THE TRIASSIC? GEOLOGICAL TIME SCALES ARE TYPICALLY MARKED BY SPECIES EXTINCTIONS BROUGHT ON BY SHIFTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT. AT THE END OF THE PERMIAN PERIOD, WHICH PRECEDED THE TRIASSIC, OVER 80% OF THE EARTH'S SPECIES WERE WIPED OUT, MARKING ONE OF THE MOST TREMENDOUS CATACLYSMS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. WITH A SURPLUS OF NEWLY OPENED ECOLOGICAL NICHES TO BE FILLED, DINOSAURS MADE THEIR ENTRANCE. HOWEVER, THESE NEWLY EMERGED DINOSAURS DID NOT INHERIT A POSITION OF DOMINANCE AMONGST LARGE ORGANISMS; RATHER, THAT SEAT WENT TO THE RELATIVES OF CROCODILES.

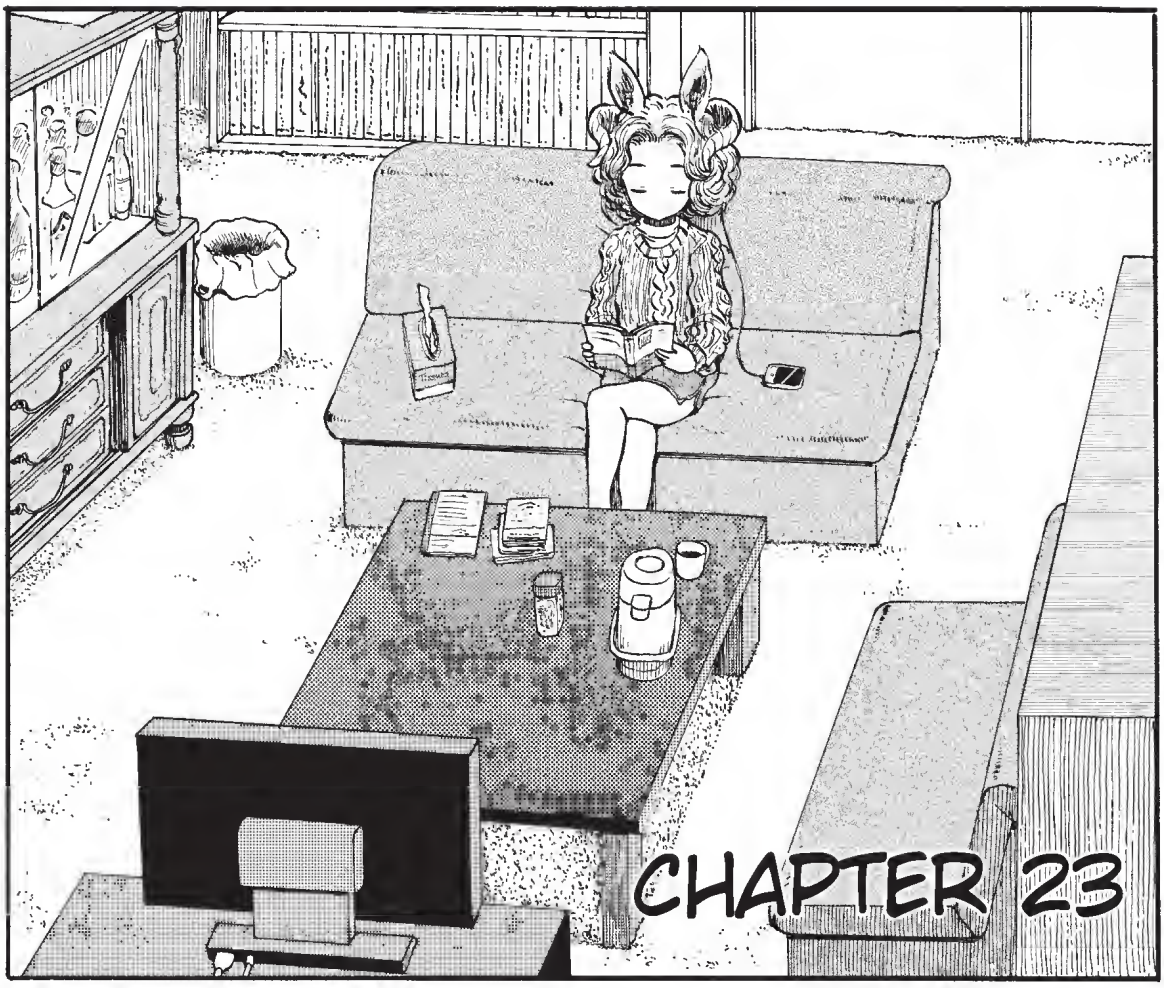
### POSTOSUCHUS

A CROCODILIAN FROM THE MIDDLE AND LATE TRIASSIC WHICH COULD GROW UP TO FIVE METERS IN LENGTH. IT IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN AN APEX PREDATOR IN ITS TIME.

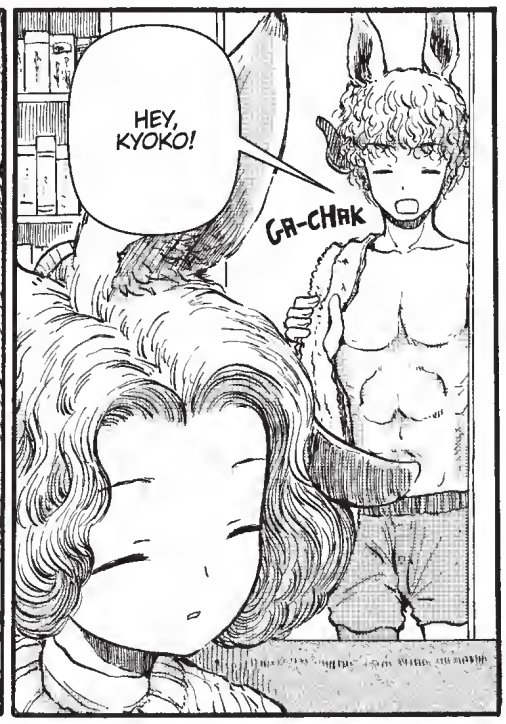


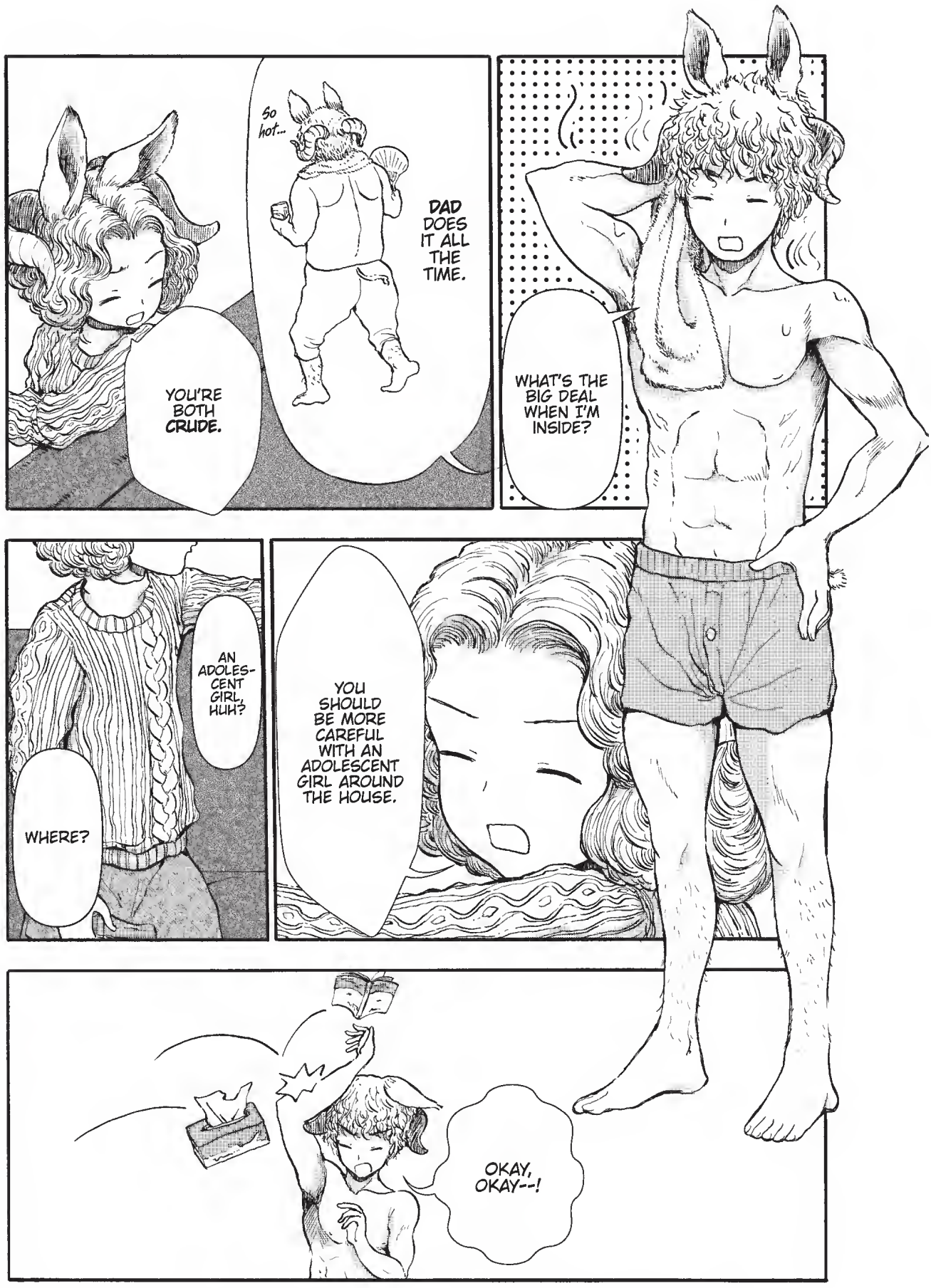
### EORAPTOR

ONE OF THE EARLIEST AND MOST PRIMITIVE DINOSAURS, THIS DINOSAUR FROM THE LATE TRIASSIC GREW TO ABOUT ONE METER IN LENGTH. THE EORAPTOR BORE CHARACTERISTICS OF BOTH THE THEROPODA AND SAUROPODA SUBORDERS, MAKING ITS CORRECT CLASSIFICATION A SUBJECT OF DEBATE.


CHAPTER 23

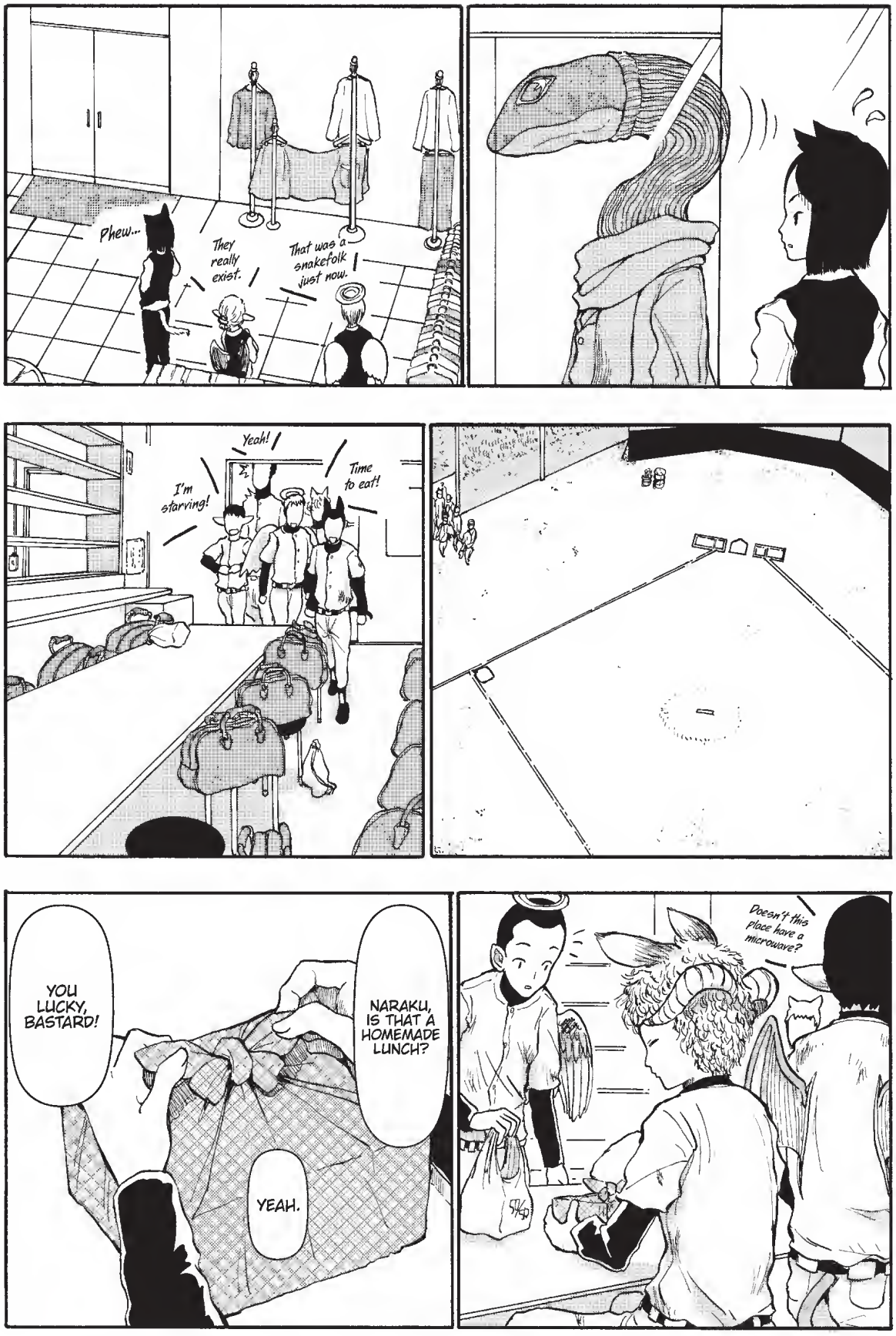
HEY--! DON'T WALK AROUND IN YOUR UNDER-WEAR!
WHAT, BIG BROTH-ER...?

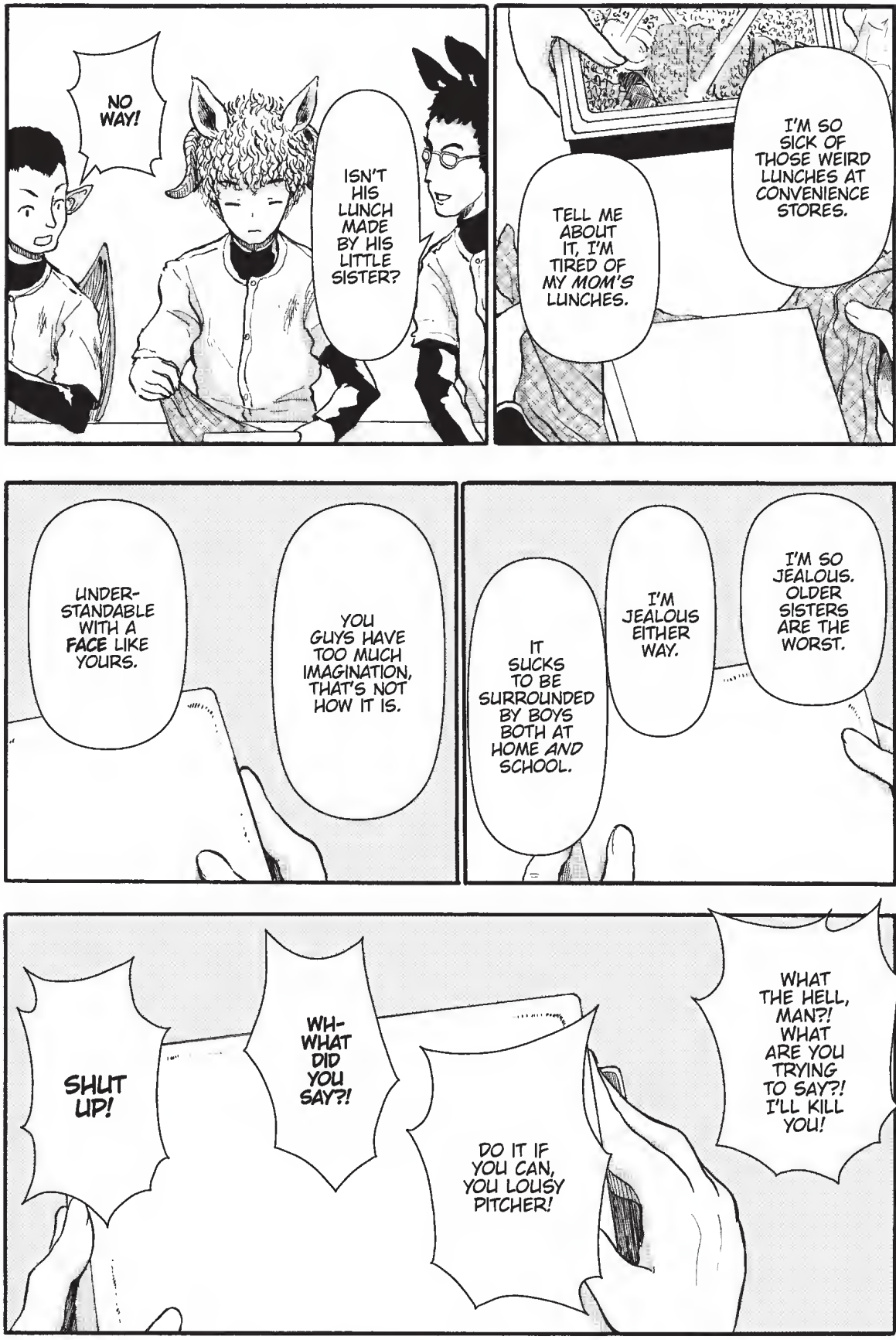

HEY, KYOKO!
GA-CHAK


So hot...
DAD DOES IT ALL THE TIME.
YOU'RE BOTH CRUDE.
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WHEN I'M INSIDE?
YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL WITH AN ADOLESCENT GIRL AROUND THE HOUSE.
AN ADOLES-CENT GIRL, HUH?
WHERE?
OKAY, OKAY--!

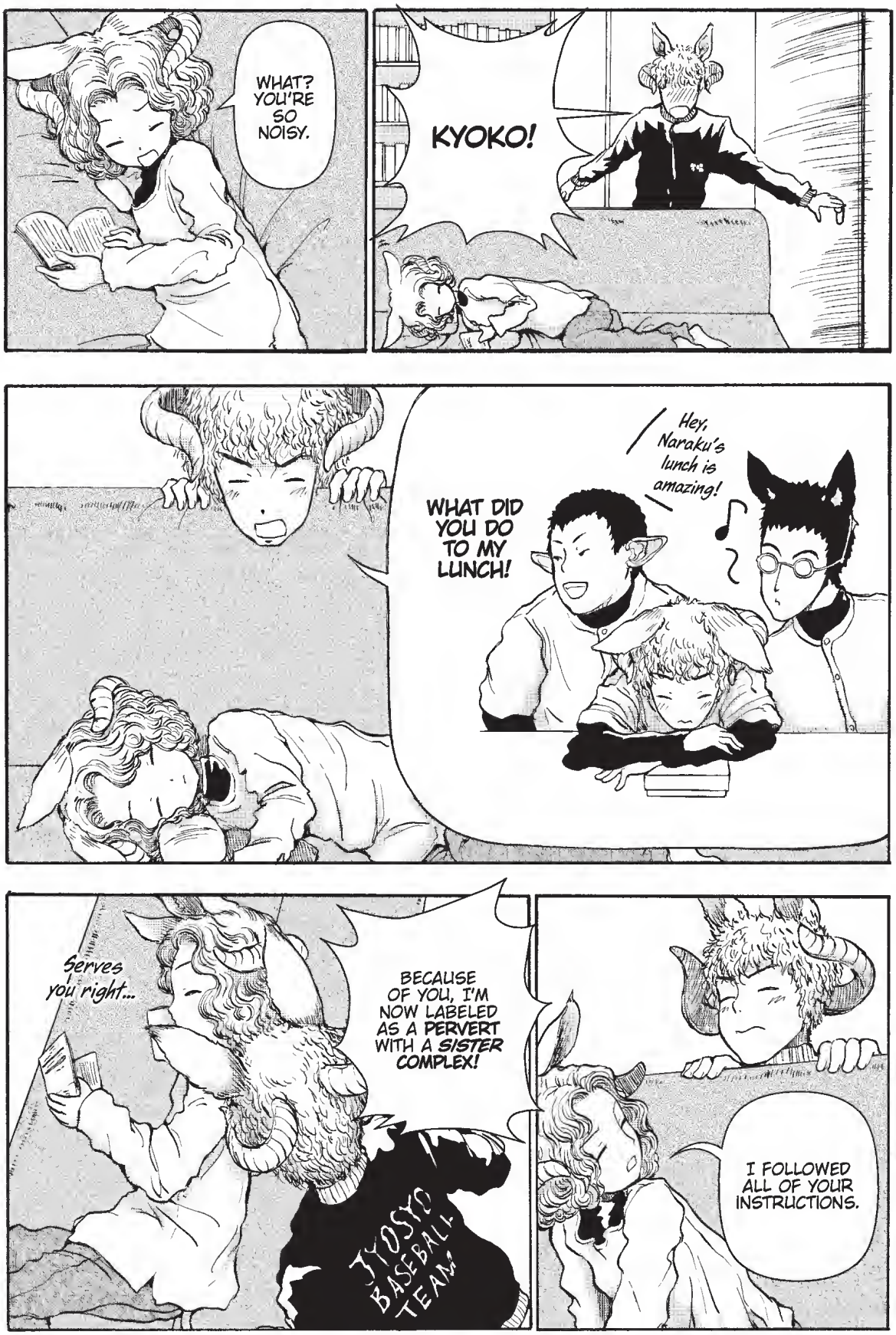
WELL, SINCE YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF LUNCH TOMORROW AND I HAVE A PRACTICE MATCH, CAN YOU MAKE ME A PACKED LUNCH?
WHAT ?!
SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I'M ALREADY HEADING TO BED.
I have to wake up really early.
THEN FIX SOME-THING.
I DON'T LIKE EATING OUT. EVERYTHING IS EITHER TOO SALTY OR TOO SWEET.
JUST BUY SOMETHING FROM THE CONVENIENCE STORE.
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!
AND SINCE I'M DOING SPORTS, THINK ABOUT THE NUTRITION I NEED.
OR YOU CAN MAKE IT TONIGHT.
WAIT, SO YOU WANT ME TO WAKE UP EVEN EARLIER FOR YOU?

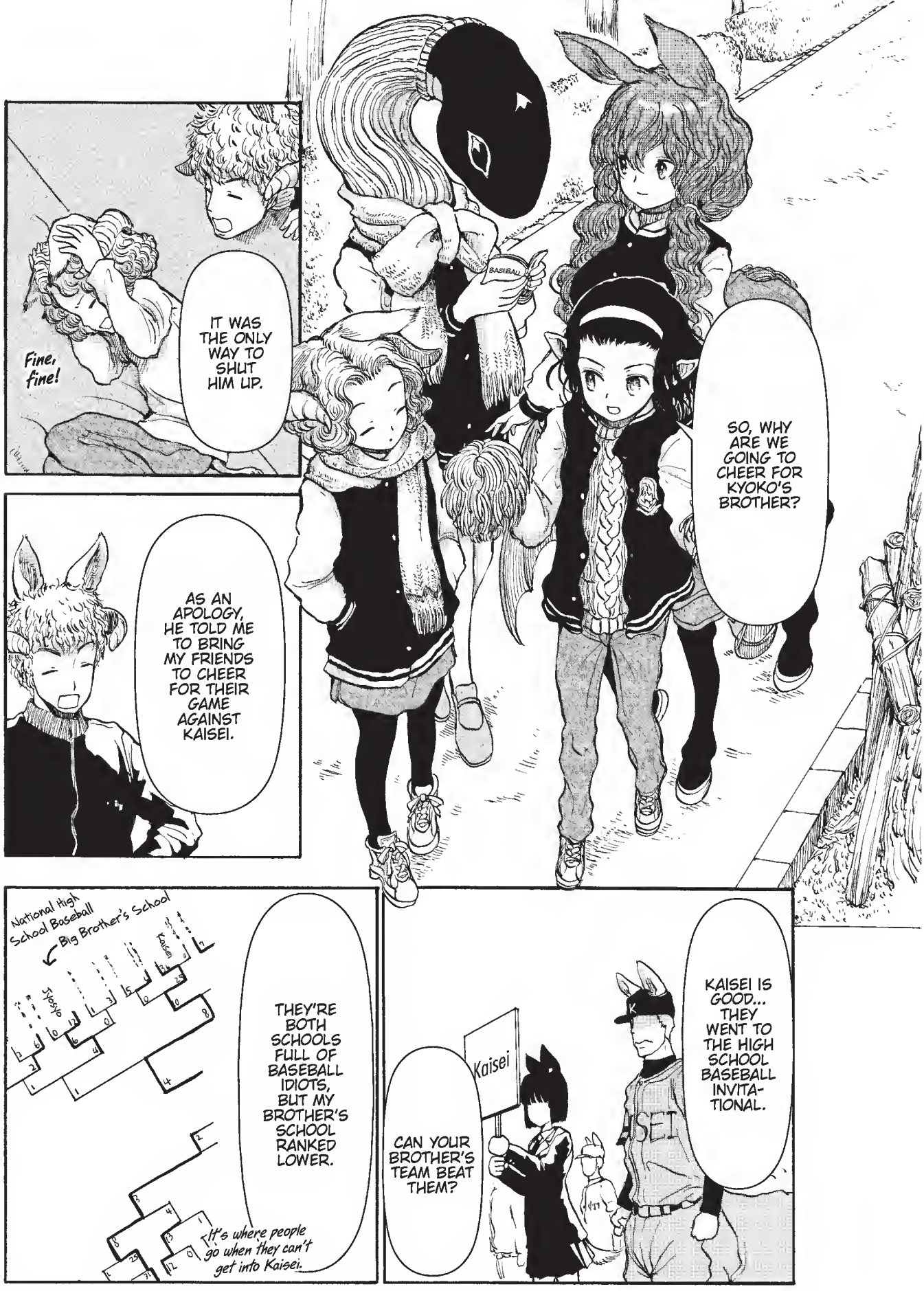
SO... YOU MADE IT FOR HIM?
IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SHUT HIM UP.
EEP, A SNAKE-FOLK!
OUR STORE DOESN'T CARRY ANY ITEMS FOR SNAKEFOLK... WILL WE BE REPORTED?!


Phew...
They really exist.
That was a snakefolk just now.
Yeah!
I'm starving!
Time to eat!
YOU LUCKY, BASTARD!
NARAKU, IS THAT A HOMEMADE LUNCH?
YEAH.
Doesn't this place have a microwave?


NO WAY!
ISN'T HIS LUNCH MADE BY HIS LITTLE SISTER?
TELL ME ABOUT IT, I'M TIRED OF MY MOM'S LUNCHES.
I'M SO SICK OF THOSE WEIRD LUNCHES AT CONVENIENCE STORES.
UNDER-STANDABLE WITH A FACE LIKE YOURS.
YOU GUYS HAVE TOO MUCH IMAGINATION, THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS.
IT SUCKS TO BE SURROUNDED BY BOYS BOTH AT HOME AND SCHOOL.
I'M JEALOUS EITHER WAY.
I'M SO JEALOUS. OLDER SISTERS ARE THE WORST.
SHUT UP!
WH-WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
DO IT IF YOU CAN, YOU LOUSY PITCHER!
WHAT THE HELL, MAN?! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?! I'LL KILL YOU!

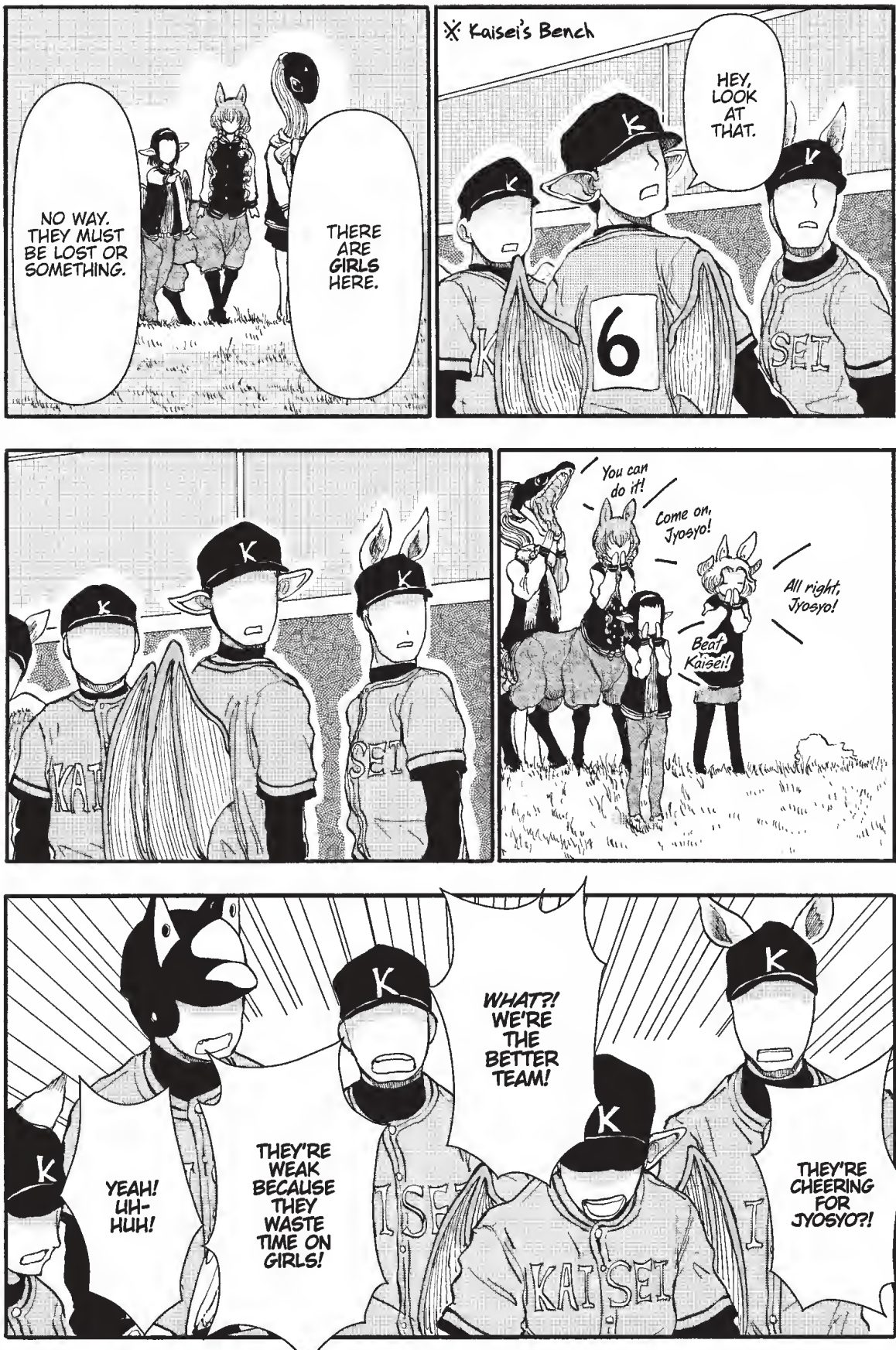
Big Brother
LOVE


WHAT? YOU'RE SO NOISY.
KYOKO!
WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY LUNCH!
Hey, Naraku's lunch is amazing!
Serves you right...
BECAUSE OF YOU, I'M NOW LABELED AS A PERVERT WITH A SISTER COMPLEX!
JYOSYO BASEBALL TEAM
I FOLLOWED ALL OF YOUR INSTRUCTIONS.

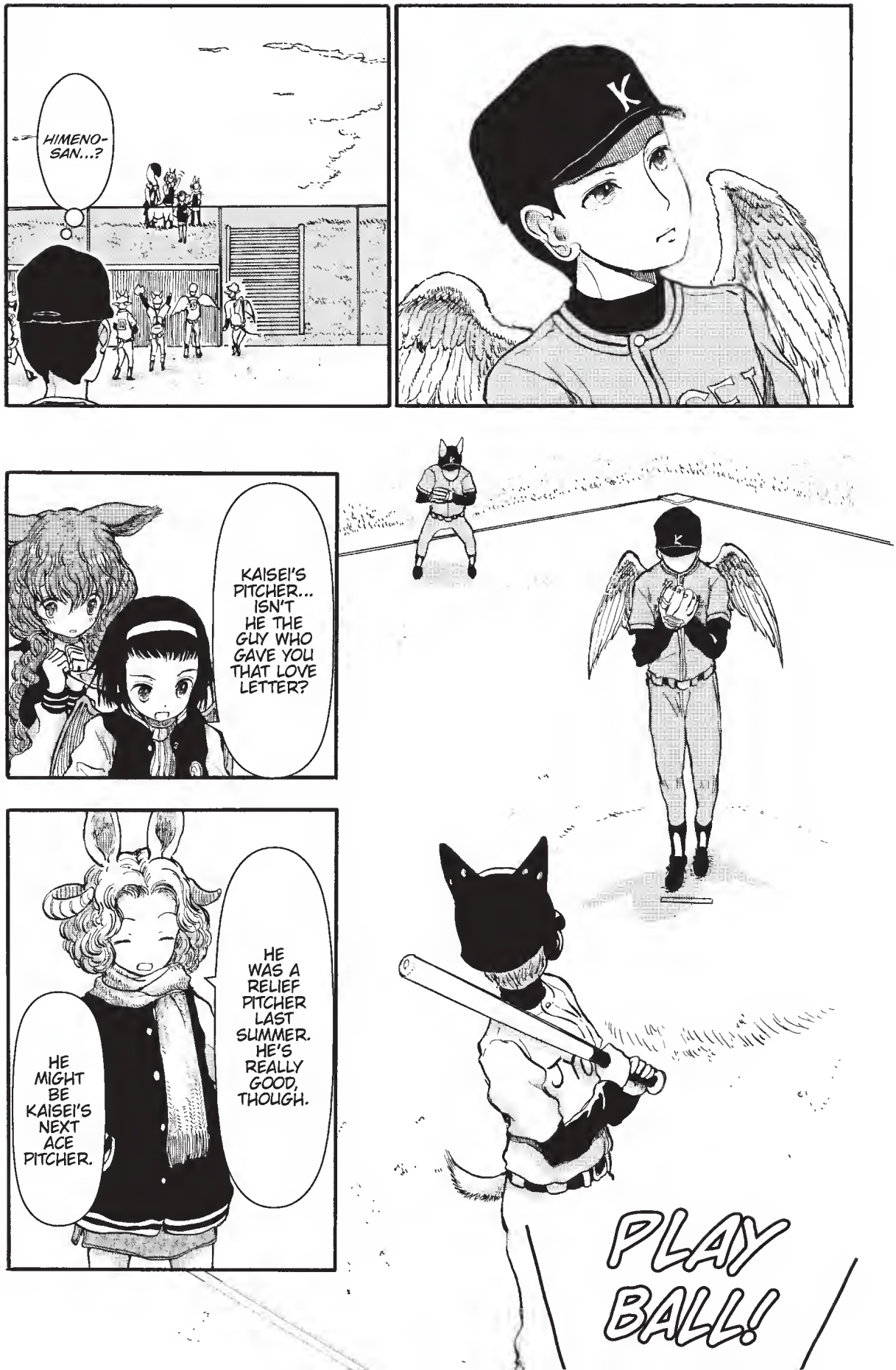

SO, WHY ARE WE GOING TO CHEER FOR KYOKO'S BROTHER?
BASEBALL
IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SHUT HIM UP.
Fine, fine!
AS AN APOLOGY, HE TOLD ME TO BRING MY FRIENDS TO CHEER FOR THEIR GAME AGAINST KAISEI.
KAISEI IS GOOD... THEY WENT TO THE HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL INVITATIONAL.
Kaisei
CAN YOUR BROTHER'S TEAM BEAT THEM?
National High School Baseball
Big Brother's School
Kaisei
Yoshio
THEY'RE BOTH SCHOOLS FULL OF BASEBALL IDIOTS, BUT MY BROTHER'S SCHOOL RANKED LOWER.
It's where people go when they can't get into Kaisei.

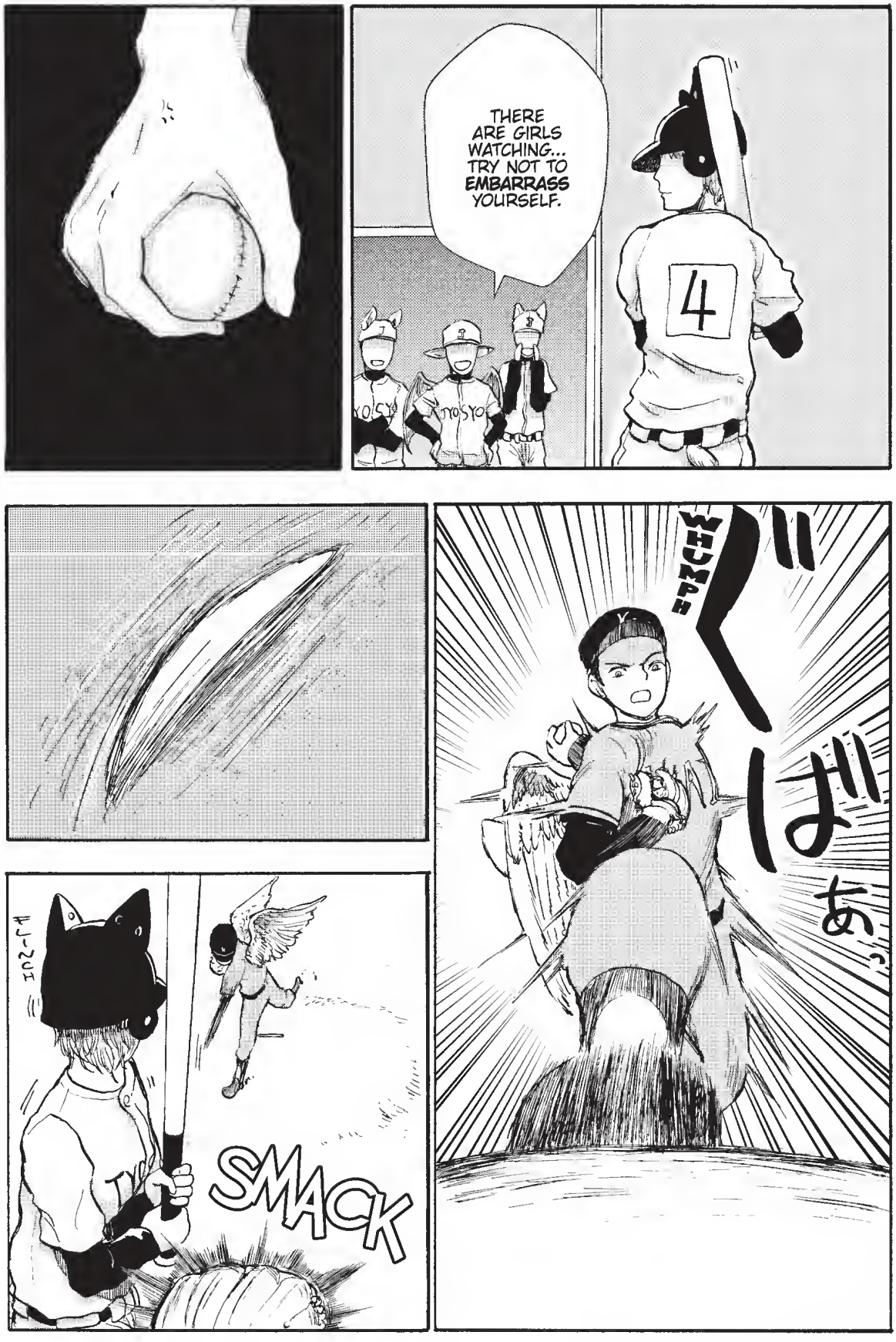
I DON'T REALLY GET IT EITHER.
I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
JUST HAVING GIRLS COME CHEER FOR THEM IS A WIN.
ACCORD-ING TO MY BROTHER...
LET'S DO THIS!
3

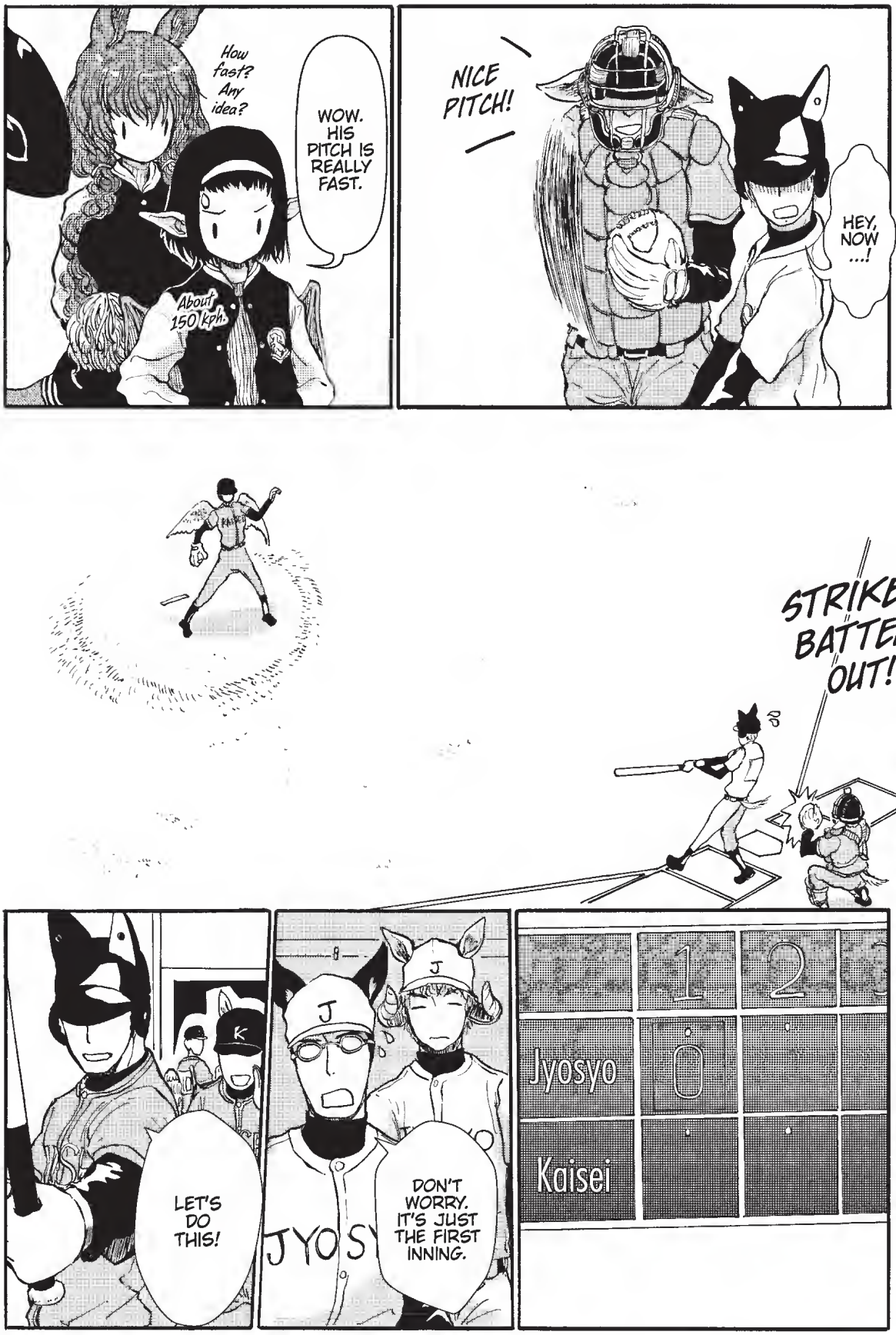
So passionate over a practice match.
LOOKS LIKE KAISEI'S SWEATY CHEERING SQUAD IS HERE, TOO.
NARAKU'S LITTLE SISTER AND HER FRIENDS ARE HERE?
JYO
12
YOU CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING.
THE ONE ON THE FAR LEFT MUST BE NARAKU'S SISTER.
CHECK IT OUT.
UM... IS IT RACIST TO SAY SHE'S NOT MY TYPE?
WHAT ABOUT THAT ONE?
WHOA... HER FRIENDS ARE ALL PRETTY HOT.
Naraku better not be dating any of them.
This is the first time I've watched a real baseball game. So exciting!
It's pretty much the same as softball.


NO WAY. THEY MUST BE LOST OR SOMETHING.
THERE ARE GIRLS HERE.
※ Kaisei's Bench
HEY, LOOK AT THAT.
You can do it!
Come on, Jyosyo!
All right, Jyosyo!
Beat Kaisei!
YEAH! UH-HUH!
THEY'RE WEAK BECAUSE THEY WASTE TIME ON GIRLS!
WHAT?! WE'RE THE BETTER TEAM!
THEY'RE CHEERING FOR JYOSYO?!

Which one?
THOSE GIRLS ARE PRETTY CUTE, HUH?
Hey, there's Kyoko's big bro!
YES, COACH!
THAT'S ENOUGH! EVERYONE CALM DOWN!
THEN GET OUT THERE AND DOMINATE!
YES, SIR!
DO YOU ALL WANT GIRLFRIENDS LIKE THAT?
YES, SIR!
KEEP WINNING, AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET GIRLS, FAME, AND MONEY! GOT IT?!
THOSE GIRLS WILL BE LOOKING AT YOU INSTEAD!

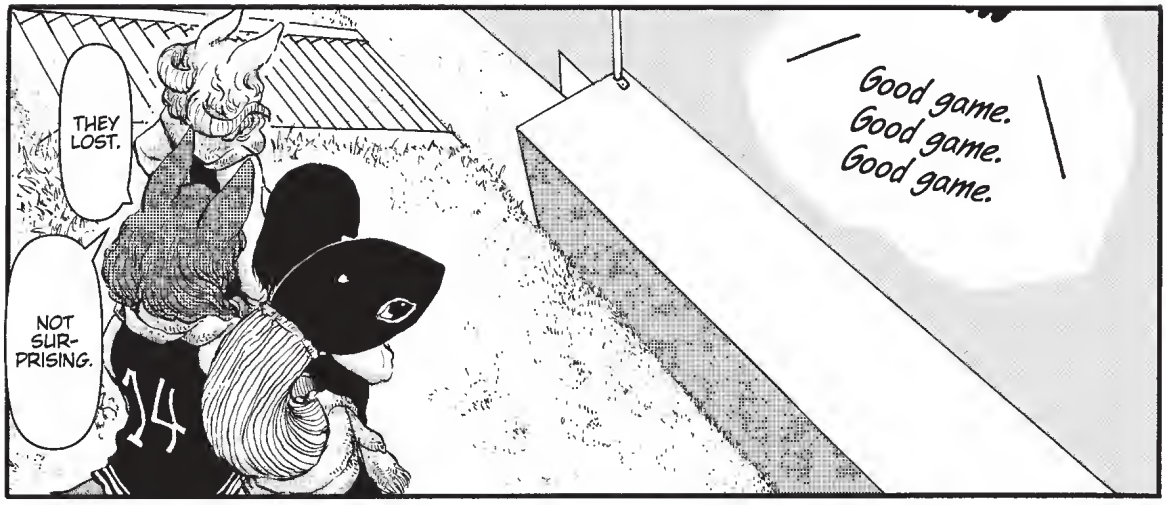

HIMENO-SAN...?
KAISEI'S PITCHER... ISN'T HE THE GUY WHO GAVE YOU THAT LOVE LETTER?
HE WAS A RELIEF PITCHER LAST SUMMER. HE'S REALLY GOOD, THOUGH.
HE MIGHT BE KAISEI'S NEXT ACE PITCHER.
PLAY BALL!

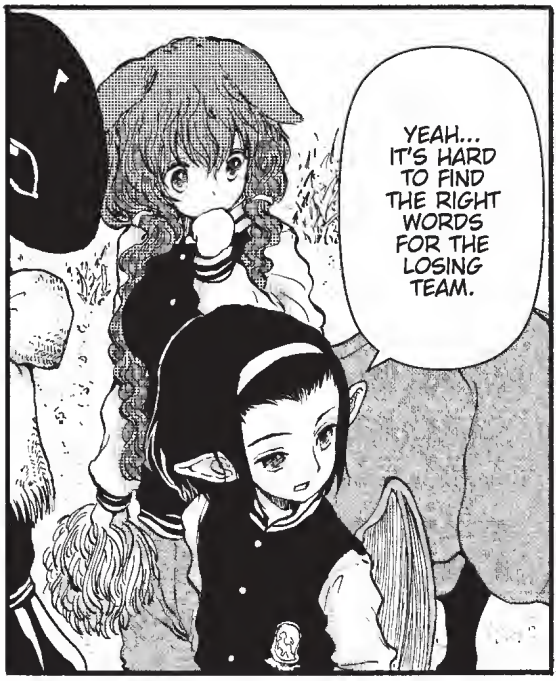

THERE ARE GIRLS WATCHING... TRY NOT TO EMBARRASS YOURSELF.
4
WHUMP!!
SMACK

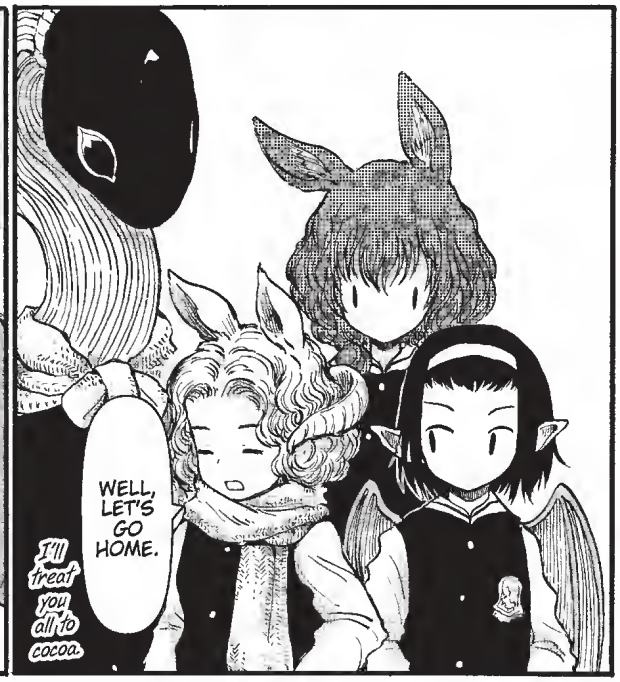

How fast? Any idea?
WOW. HIS PITCH IS REALLY FAST.
About 150 kph.
NICE PITCH!
HEY, NOW ...!
STRIKE! BATTER OUT!
LET'S DO THIS!
DON'T WORRY. IT'S JUST THE FIRST INNING.
1
2
Jyosyo
0
Kaisei

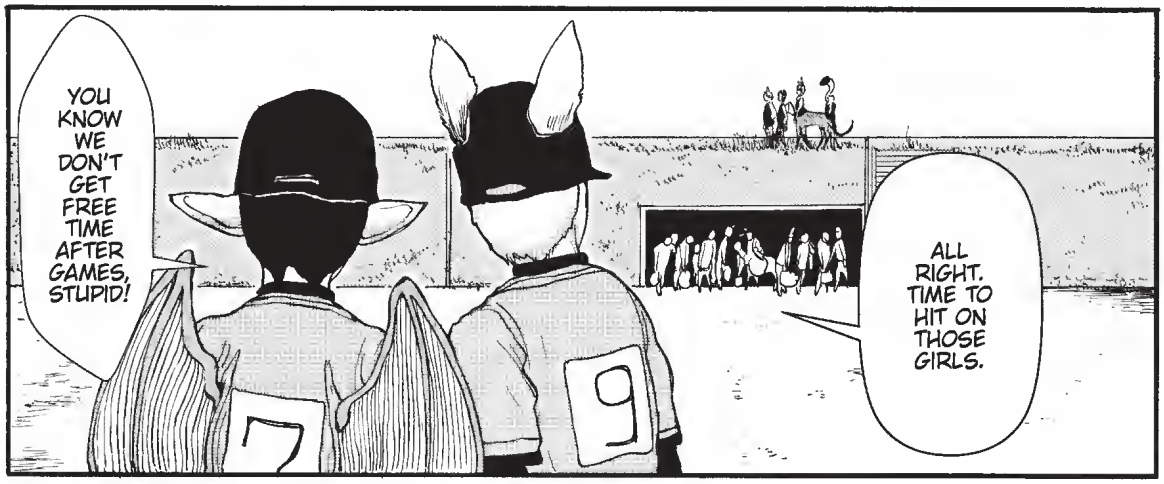
Fight! Win! Kaisei!
CLANG
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Jyosyo 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
Kaisei 3 1 0 2 0 1 0
EVEN IF WE LOSE, AS LONG AS I HIT THIS...!
Come on, big brother~!
GOTTA MAKE MY LITTLE SISTER PROUD.

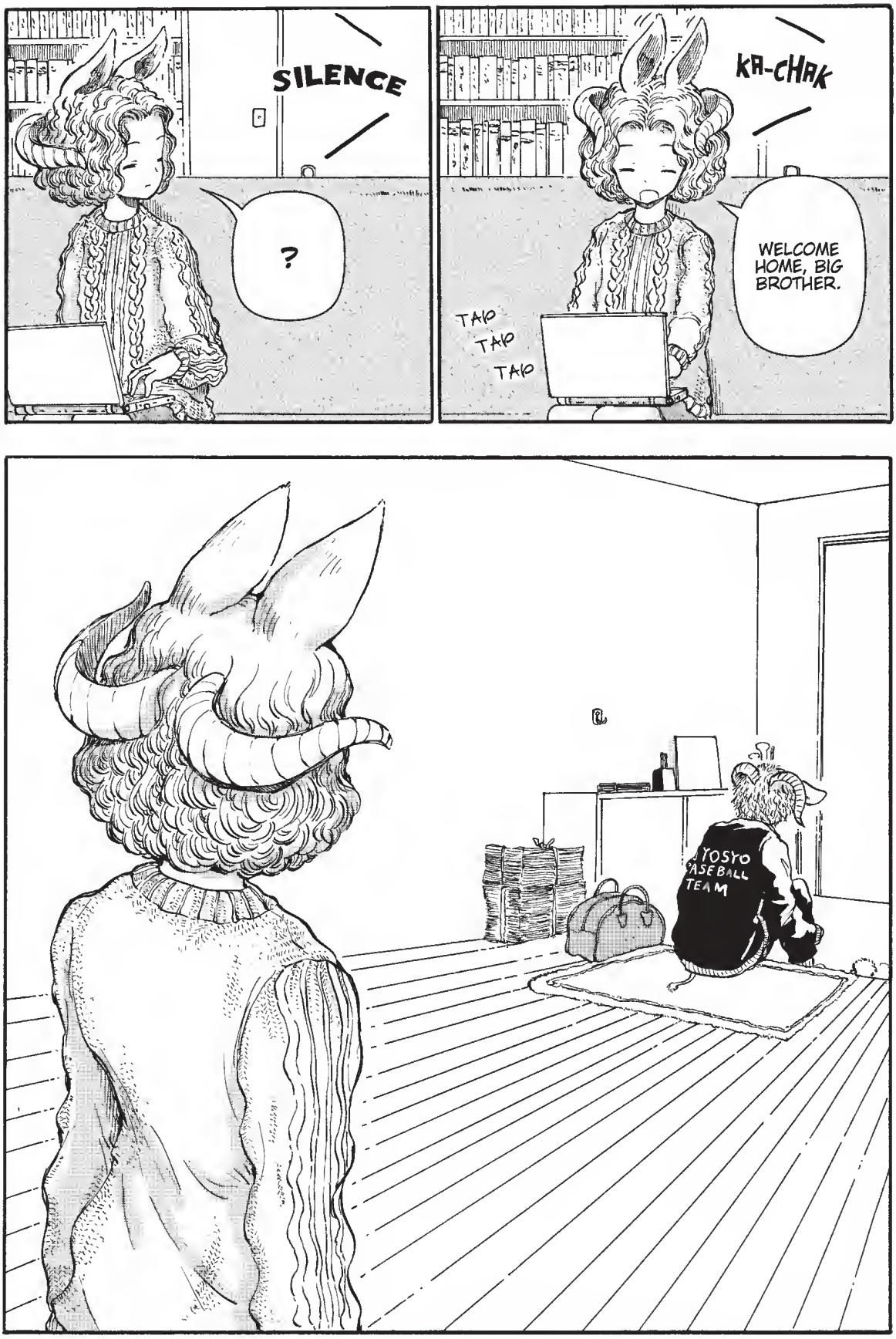
I HIT IT?!
CLANG
Got it!
KAISEI
Aww~!
Batter out! That's the game!


Good game.
Good game.
Good game.
THEY LOST.
NOT SUR-PRISING.


YEAH... IT'S HARD TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS FOR THE LOSING TEAM.

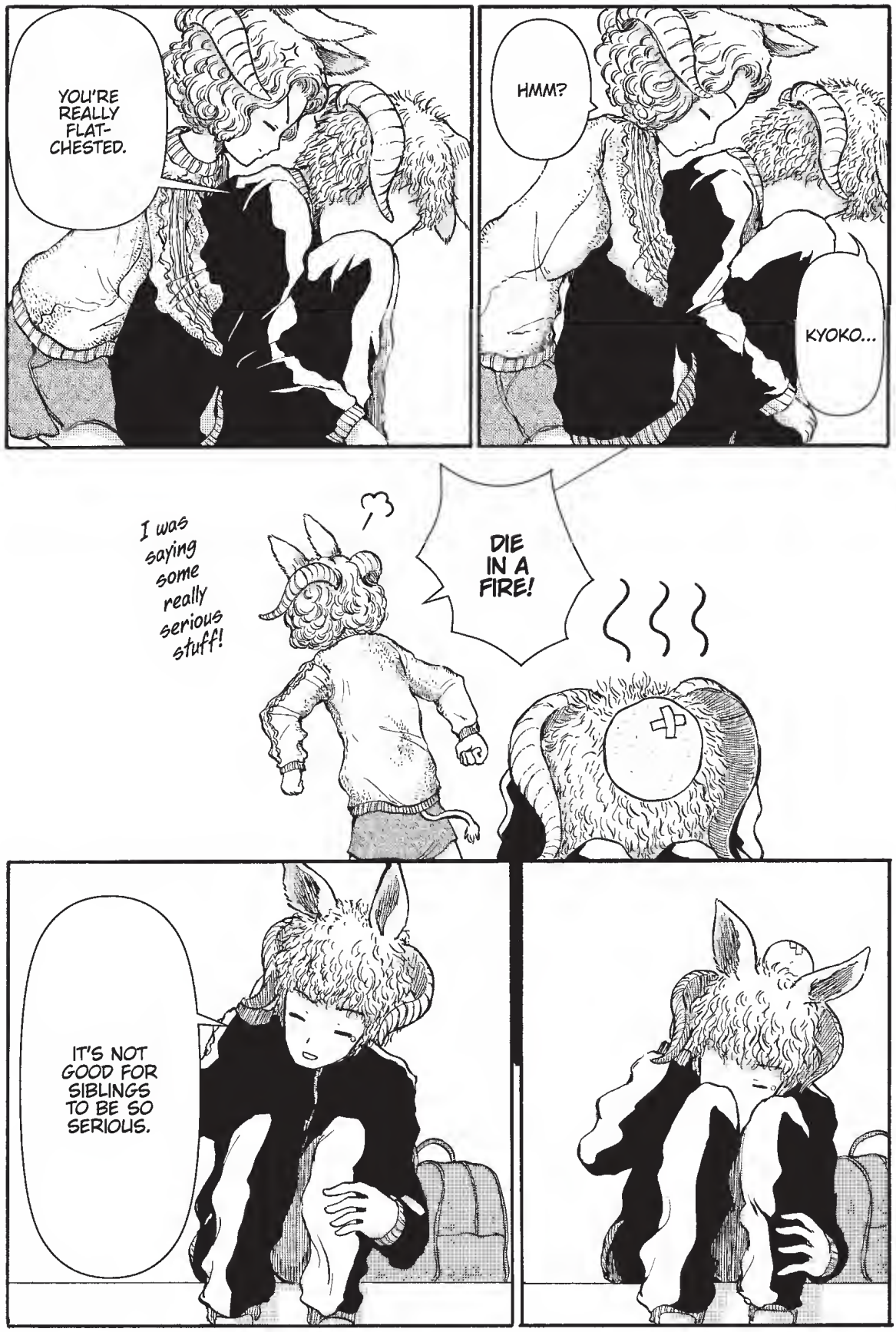

WELL, LET'S GO HOME.
I'll treat you all to cocoa.


YOU KNOW WE DON'T GET FREE TIME AFTER GAMES, STUPID!
ALL RIGHT. TIME TO HIT ON THOSE GIRLS.


SILENCE
?
KA-CHAK
WELCOME HOME, BIG BROTHER.
TAP TAP TAP
YOSTO BASEBALL TEAM

DON'T WORRY, WE WEREN'T EXPECTING MUCH.
YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS DIDN'T SEE MY COOL SIDE.
SORRY.
JYOSYO BASEBALL TEAM
LOOK, THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULD DO. THEY WERE JUST THE BETTER TEAM.
Now he's pouting...
JYOSYO BASEBALL TEAM
THE ONLY THING I HAVE GOING FOR ME IS BASEBALL.
I'M NOT SMART LIKE YOU.

"BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL PLAYER ISN'T EVERYTHING."
I WON'T SAY ANYTHING CLICHÉ LIKE THAT.
EVERYONE HAS SETBACKS.
WHAT'S THE POINT IF YOU GIVE UP NOW? ALL YOU CAN DO IS MOVE FORWARD.
I MEAN, YOU STILL HAVE A YEAR. THEN COLLEGE AFTER THAT.
YOU COULD EVEN GET A REGULAR JOB AND START OFF NON-PROFESSIONALLY. SO CHEER UP, OKAY?


YOU'RE REALLY FLAT-CHESTED.
HMM?
KYOKO...
I was saying some really serious stuff!
DIE IN A FIRE!
IT'S NOT GOOD FOR SIBLINGS TO BE SO SERIOUS.

A CentaUr's Life

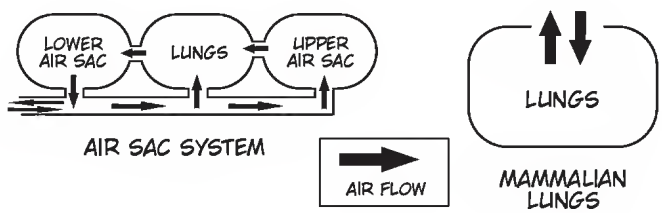
# MESOZOIC CREATURES

## DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: ON THE PROGRESSION OF DINOSAURS AND THEIR AIR SAC SYSTEM

THE WORLD DURING THE TRIASSIC PERIOD WAS ONE OF INTENSE HEAT AND LOW OXYGEN. DURING THE PALEOZOIC ERA, THE EARTH'S OXYGEN CONCENTRATION REACHED A HEIGHT OF 35%, DROPPING ALL THE WAY DOWN TO 10% BY THE END OF THE TRIASSIC (IN MODERN TIMES, IT IS AT APPROXIMATELY 20%).

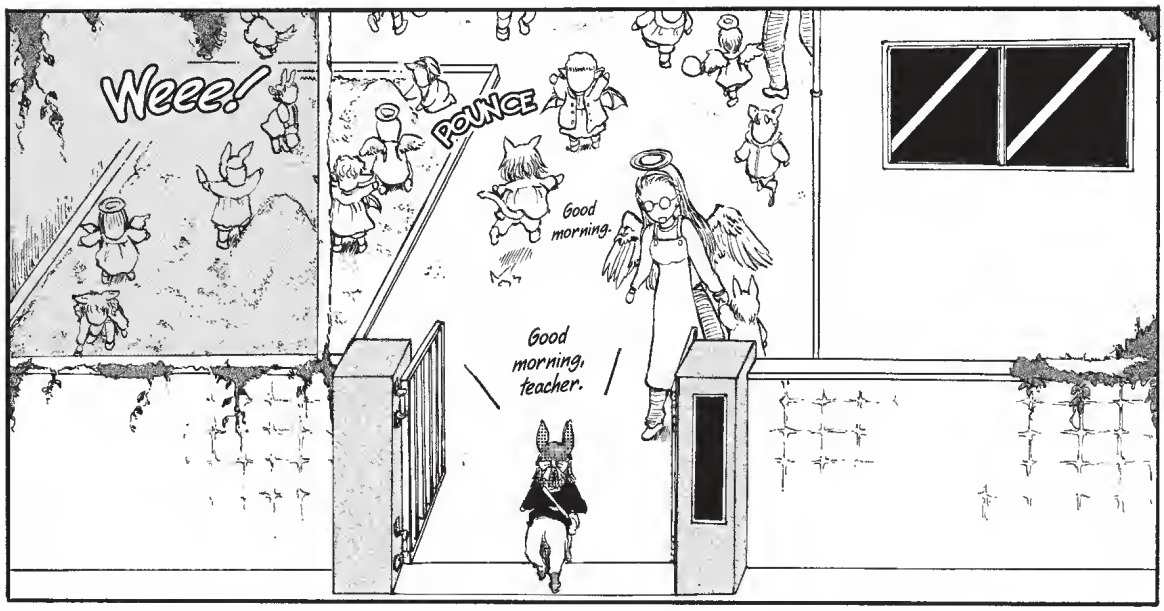
AS SUCH, THE CLOSING OF THE TRIASSIC PERIOD BROUGHT WITH IT ANOTHER MASS EXTINCTION. DINOSAURS MANAGED TO SURVIVE, AND AS THE EARTH'S OXYGEN LEVEL GRADUALLY INCREASED IN THE SUBSEQUENT JURASSIC AND CRETACEOUS PERIODS, THEY ACTUALLY INCREASED IN DIVERSITY AND SECURED THEIR POSITION OF DOMINANCE. BUT WHAT ALLOWED THEM TO DO THIS?

DINOSAURS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE HAD A RESPIRATORY ORGAN CALLED AN *AIR SAC*, MUCH LIKE THAT OF MODERN BIRDS (OR MORE ACCURATELY, BIRDS *INHERITED* THIS AIR SAC FEATURE FROM DINOSAURS). IN CONTRAST TO THE TWO-WAY BREATHING METHOD OF MAMMALS, WHERE THE EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION OF THE THORAX AND DIAPHRAGM FILLS AND EMPTIES THE LUNGS, THE AIR SAC SYSTEM IS MORE EFFICIENT. THE AIR ENTERS THE AIR SAC, PASSES THROUGH THE LUNGS AND THEN FLOWS INTO *ANOTHER* AIR SAC, WHICH FINALLY EXPELS THE AIR. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS EFFICIENT RESPIRATORY SYSTEM IS WHAT ALLOWS BIRDS TO GENERATE THE VAST AMOUNTS OF ENERGY NEEDED TO BEAT THEIR WINGS AND STAY ALOFT. IT IS THIS VERY SAME METHOD THAT ALLOWED THE DINOSAURS TO ENDURE A LOW-OXYGEN AGE, PUSH THEIR WAY PAST OTHER SPECIES, AND PROGRESS AS A GROUP.

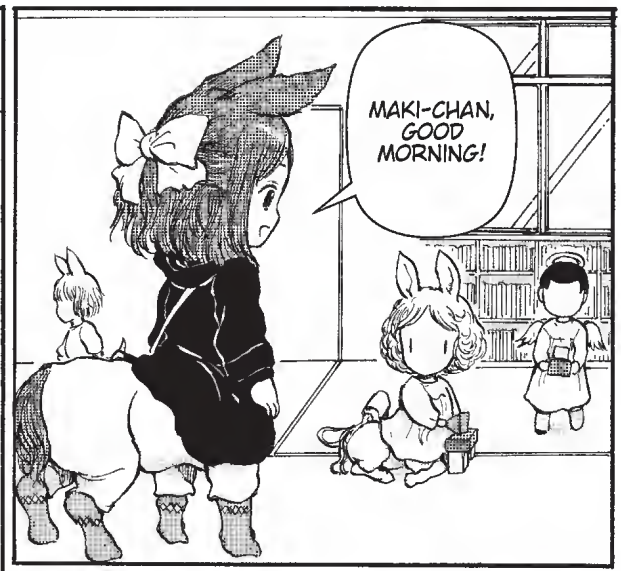


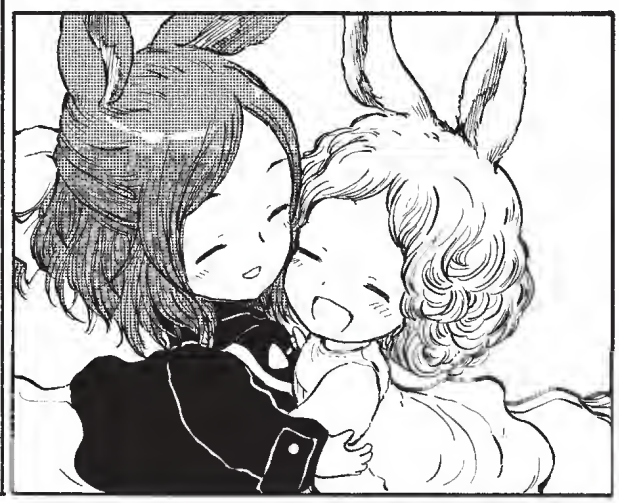

### OVIRAPTOR

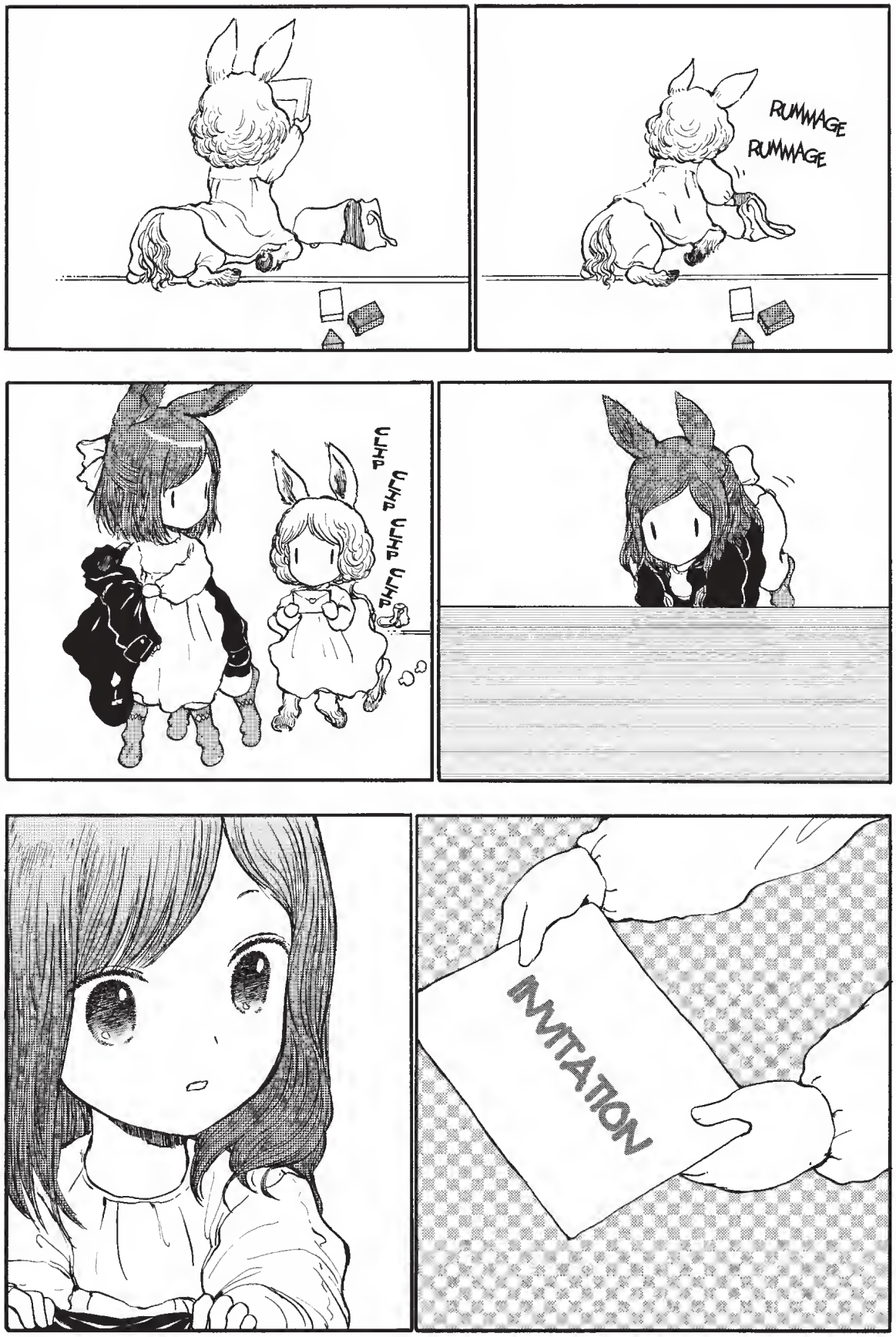
A THEROPOD TWO TO THREE METERS IN LENGTH THAT THRIVED DURING THE LATE CRETACEOUS PERIOD. DUE TO AN EARLY FOSSIL DISCOVERY IN WHICH THE OVIRAPTOR WAS FOUND OVERLAIN WITH A PILE OF EGGS, IT WAS GIVEN THE NICKNAME "EGG TAKER," BUT FURTHER RESEARCH REVEALED THAT THE DINOSAUR WAS IN FACT PROTECTING ITS OWN EGGS. HOWEVER, THE RAPTOR'S TOOTHLESS BEAK AND UPPER BONE STRUCTURE RESEMBLE THAT OF THE EGG-EATING SNAKE, SUGGESTING IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN EGG-EATER NONETHELESS.

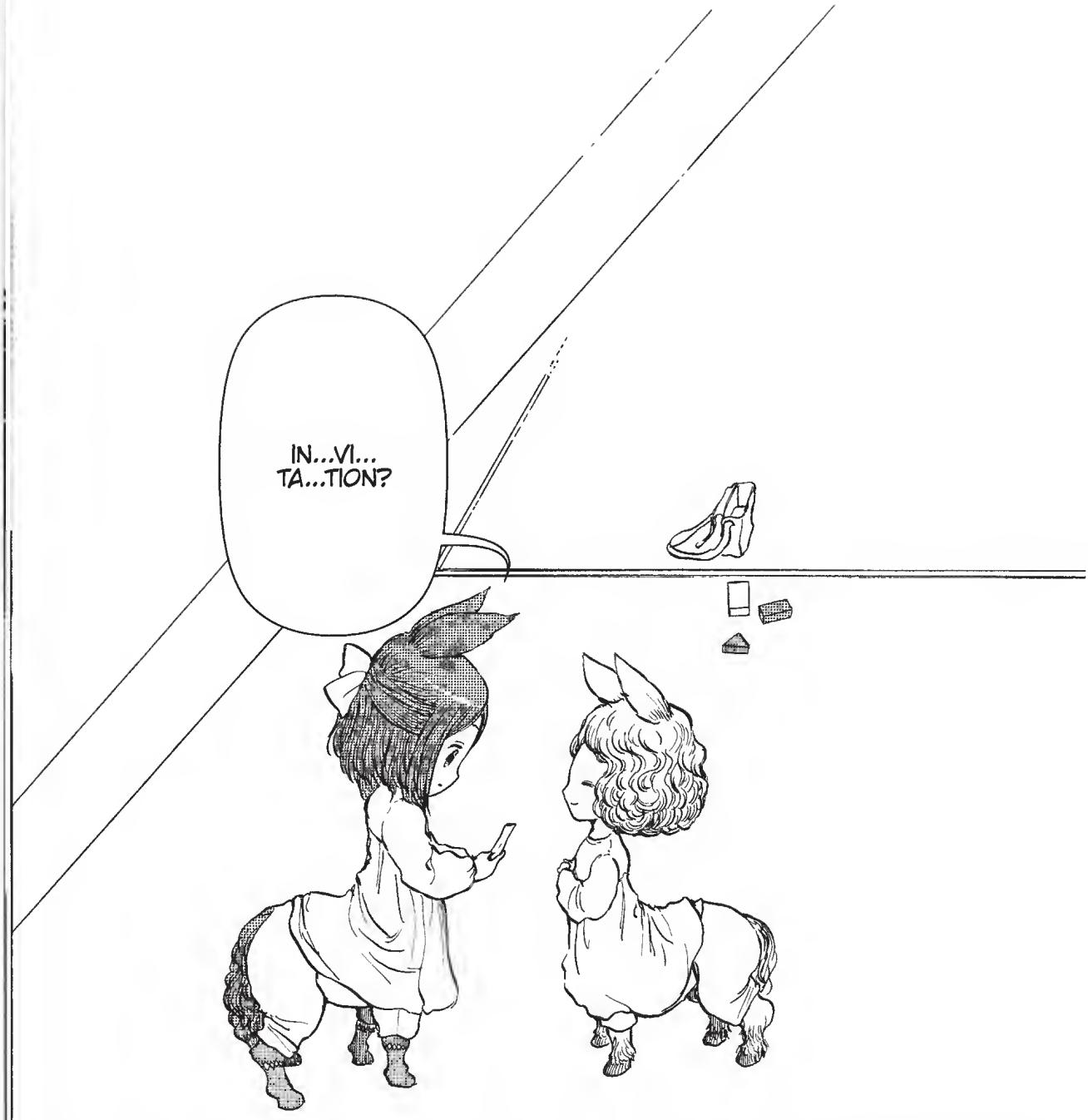

Weee!
POUNCE
Good morning.
Good morning, teacher.

DASH


MAKI-CHAN, GOOD MORNING!

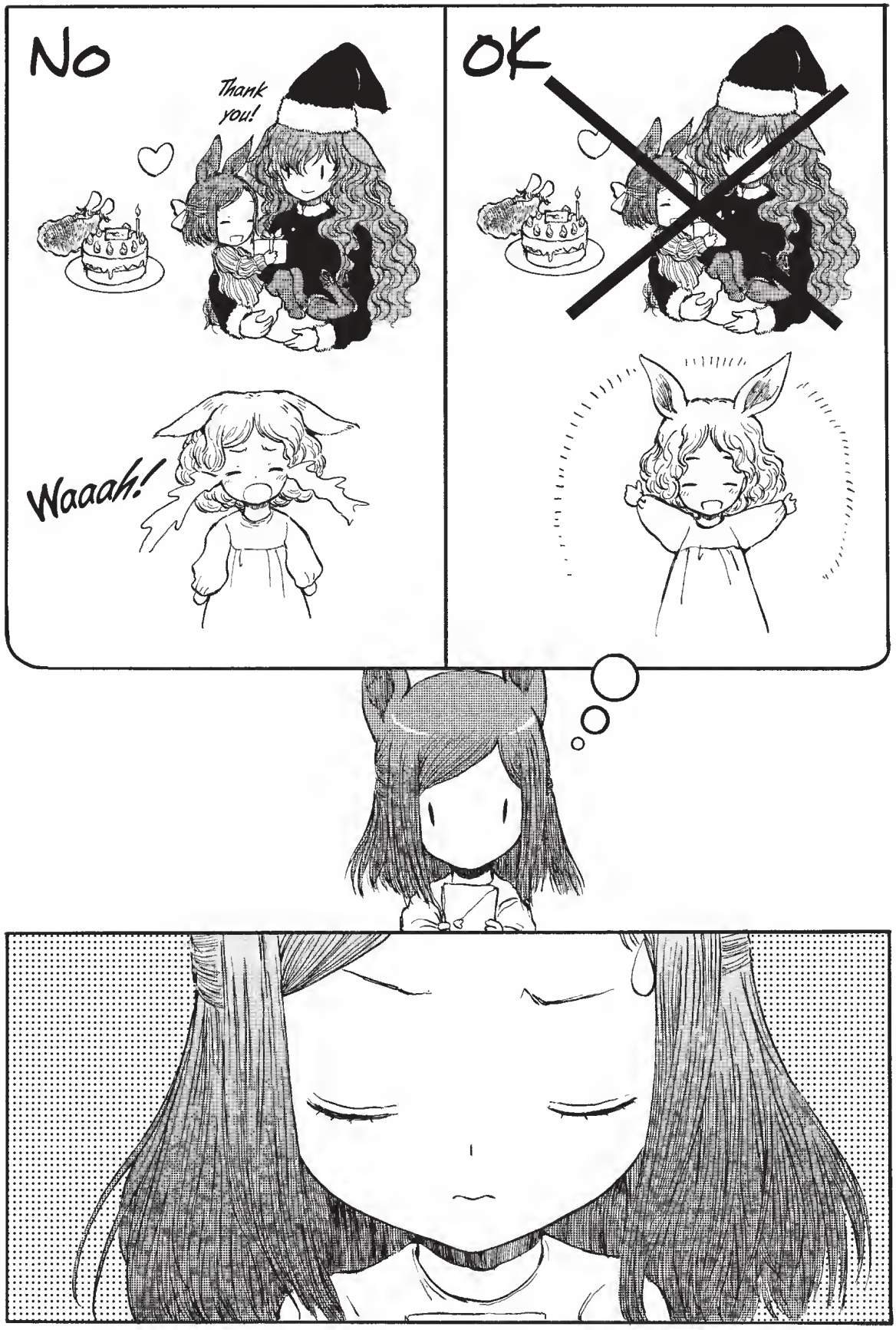


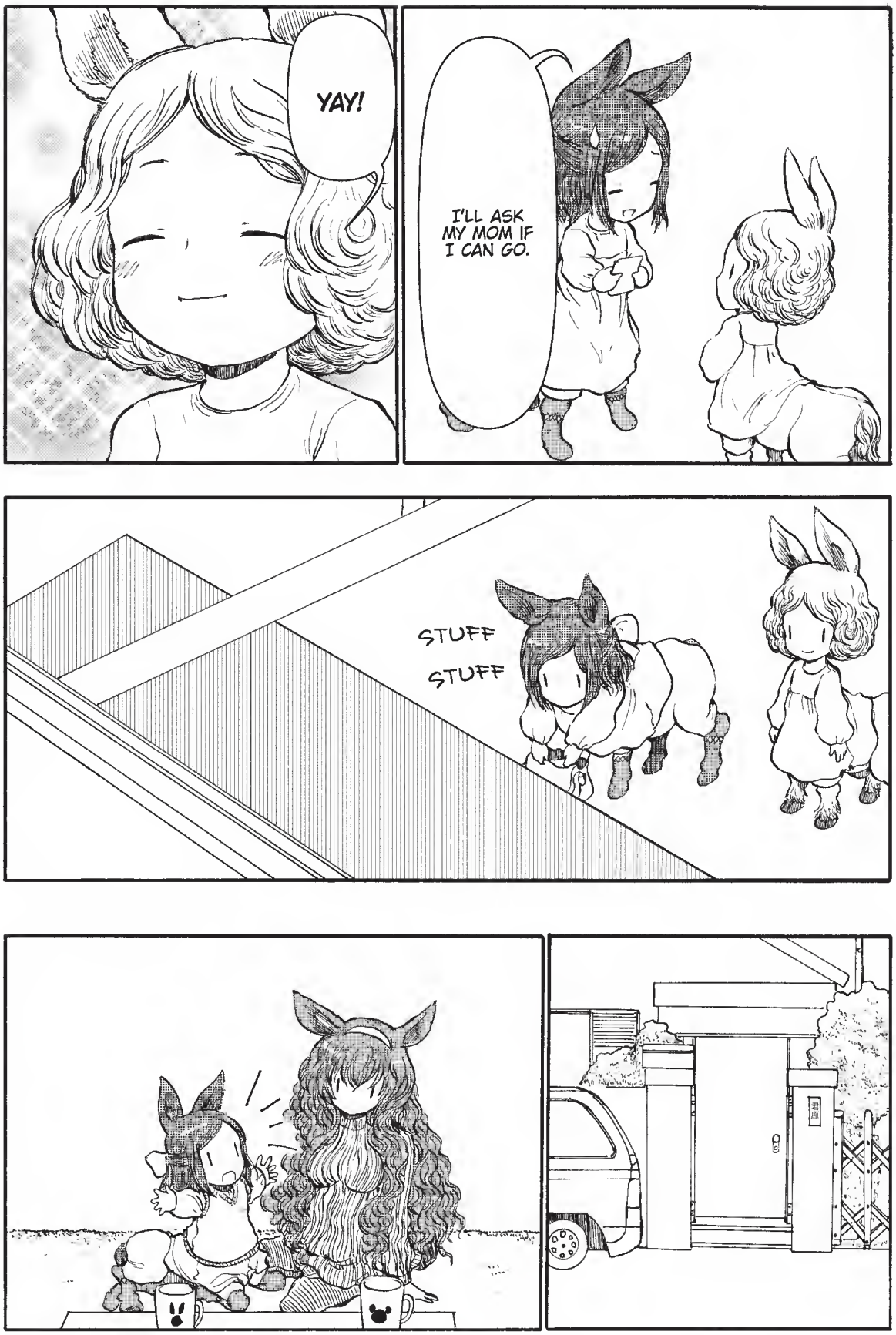

RUMMAGE
RUMMAGE
CLIP CLIP CLIP CLIP
INVITATION



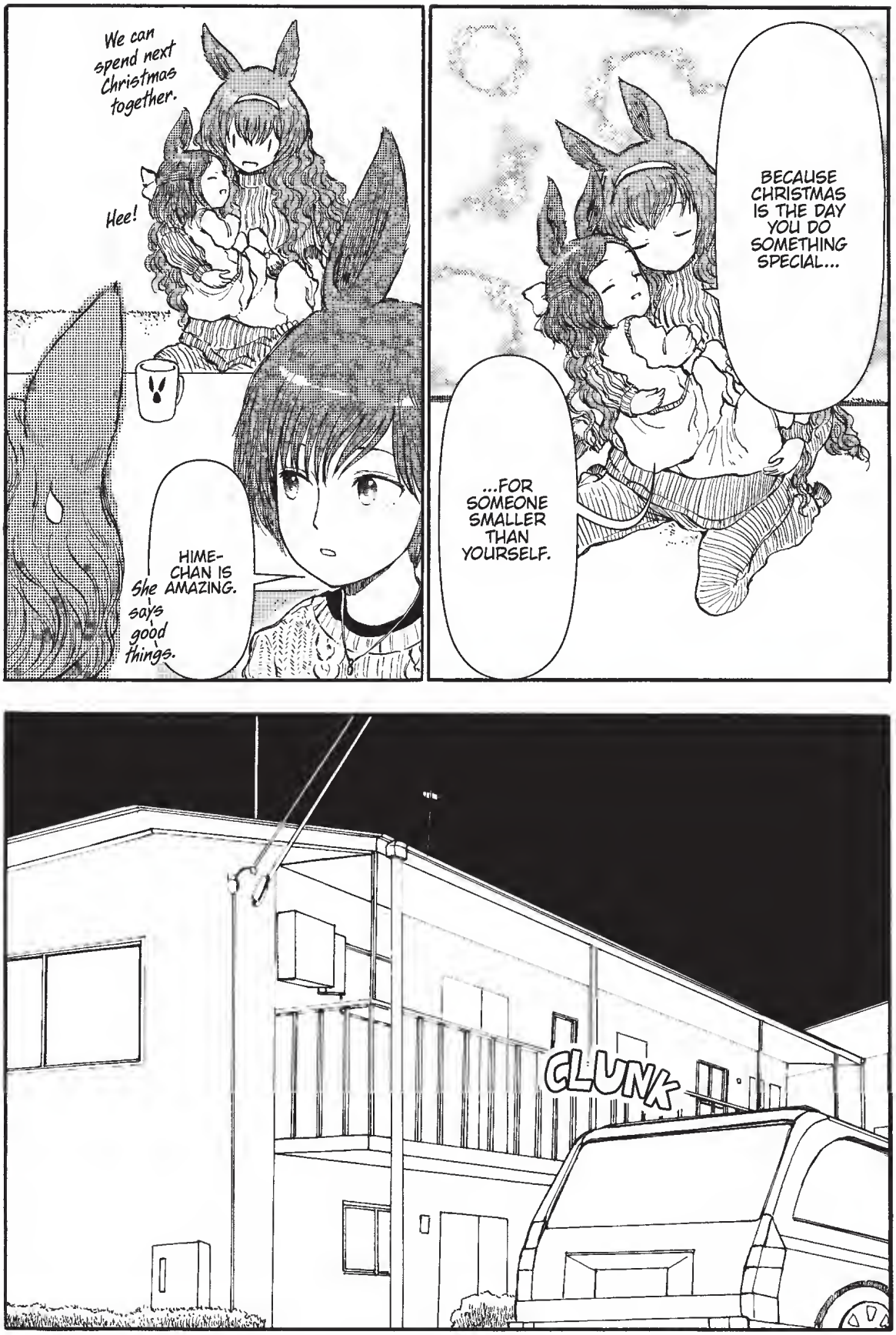

# CHAPTER 24

Big Sister Shino-chan
Merry Xmas
Christmas Party
CHRISTMAS PARTY?
YEAH.
DID YOU WRITE THIS MAKI-CHAN? GOOD JOB!
YEAH.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO INVITE TA-CHAN?
WHO ELSE IS GOING?
JUST BIG SIS SHINO-CHAN!
IT'S FINE, BUT...
NOT... OKAY?

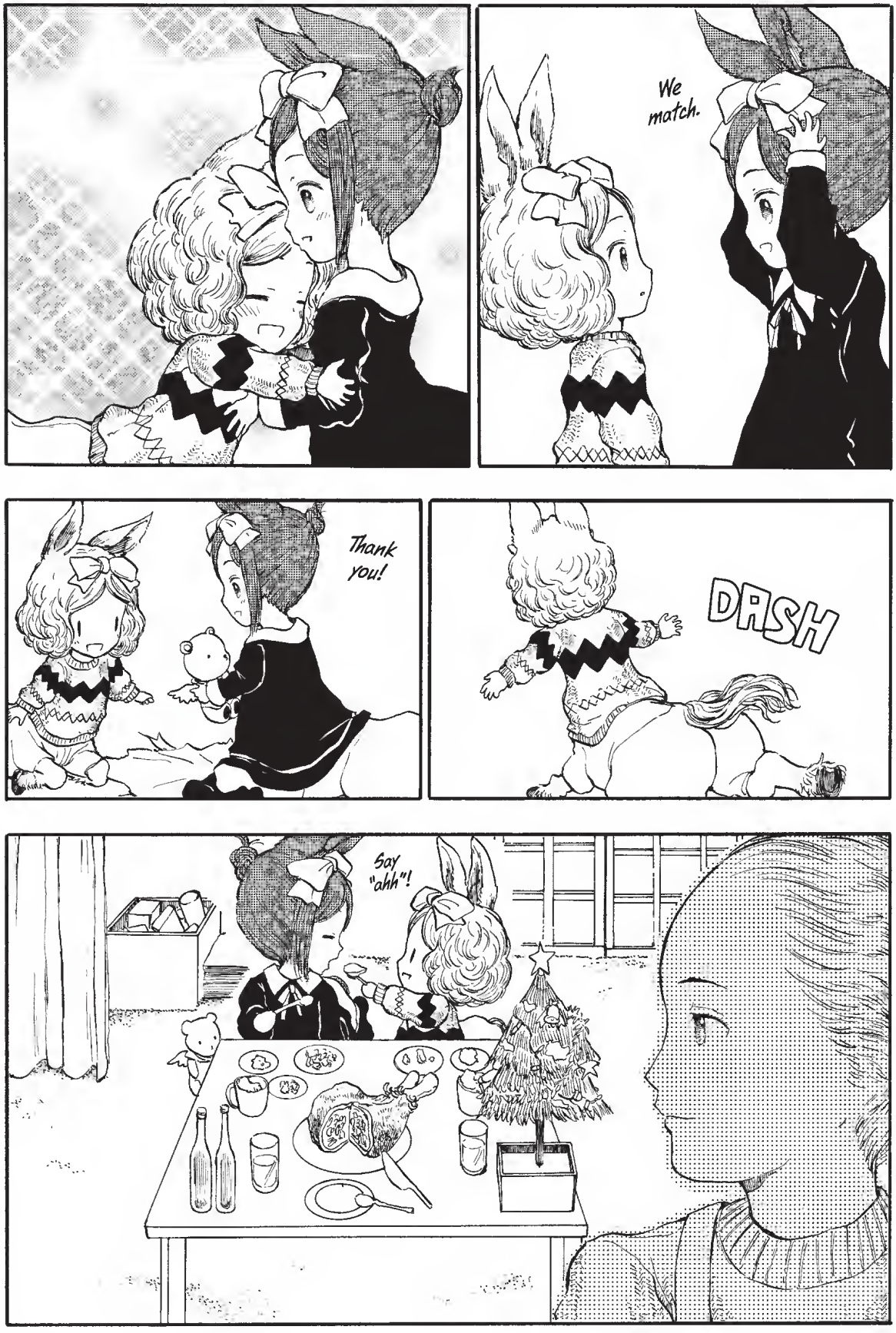

No
Thank you!
Waaah!
OK

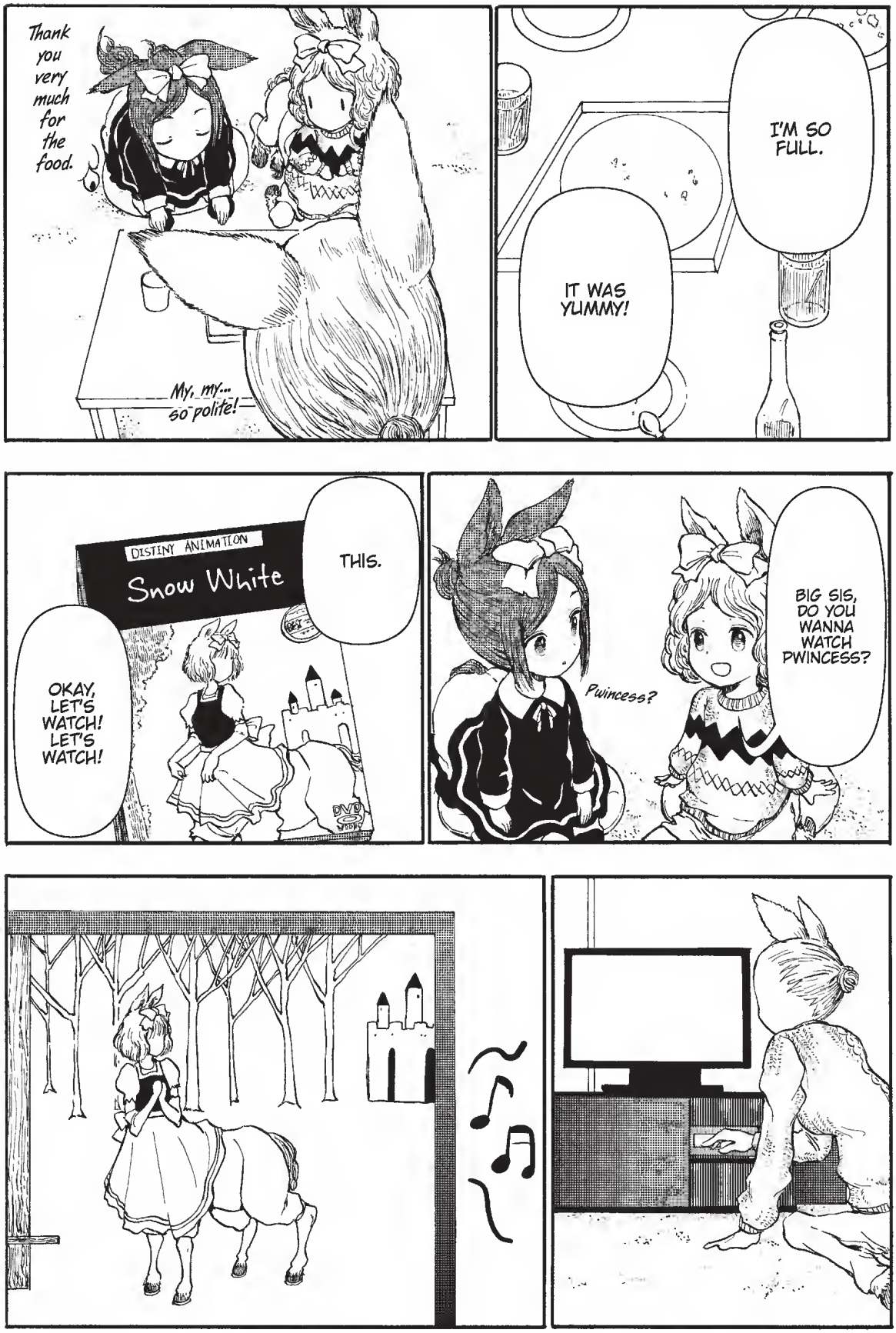

YAY!
I'LL ASK MY MOM IF I CAN GO.
STUFF
STUFF

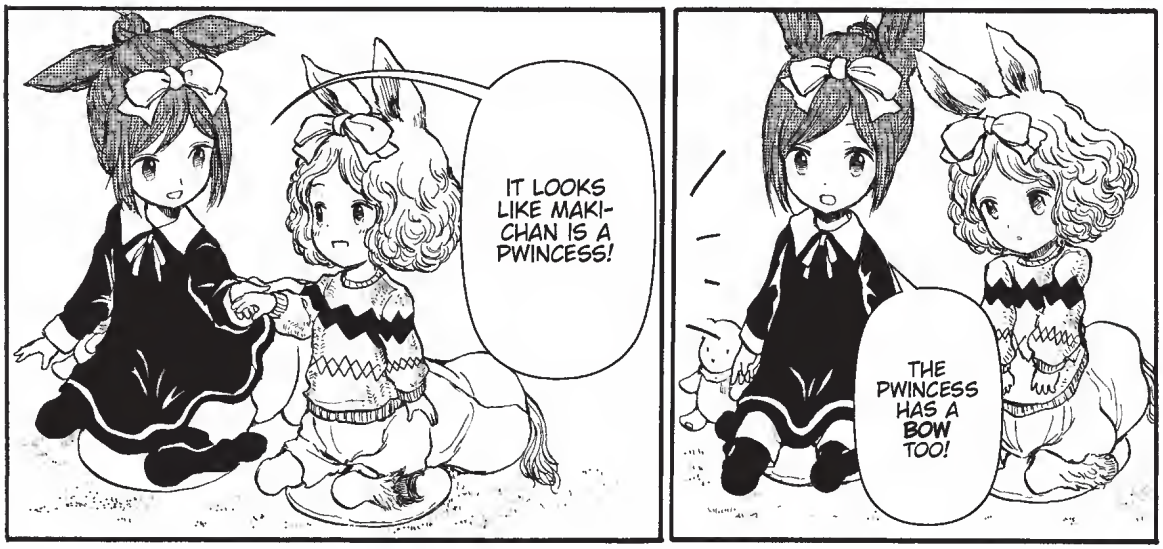
I THINK YOU SHOULD GO TO MAKI-CHAN'S.
OF COURSE BIG SISTER WANTS TO SPEND CHRISTMAS WITH SHINO-CHAN.
HUH?
BUT... DOESN'T BIG SISTER WANT TO BE WITH SHINO FOR CHRISTMAS?
HOW COME?
YOU SHOULD GRANT MAKI-CHAN'S WISH.
BUT MAKI-CHAN IS SMALLER THAN SHINO-CHAN, RIGHT?

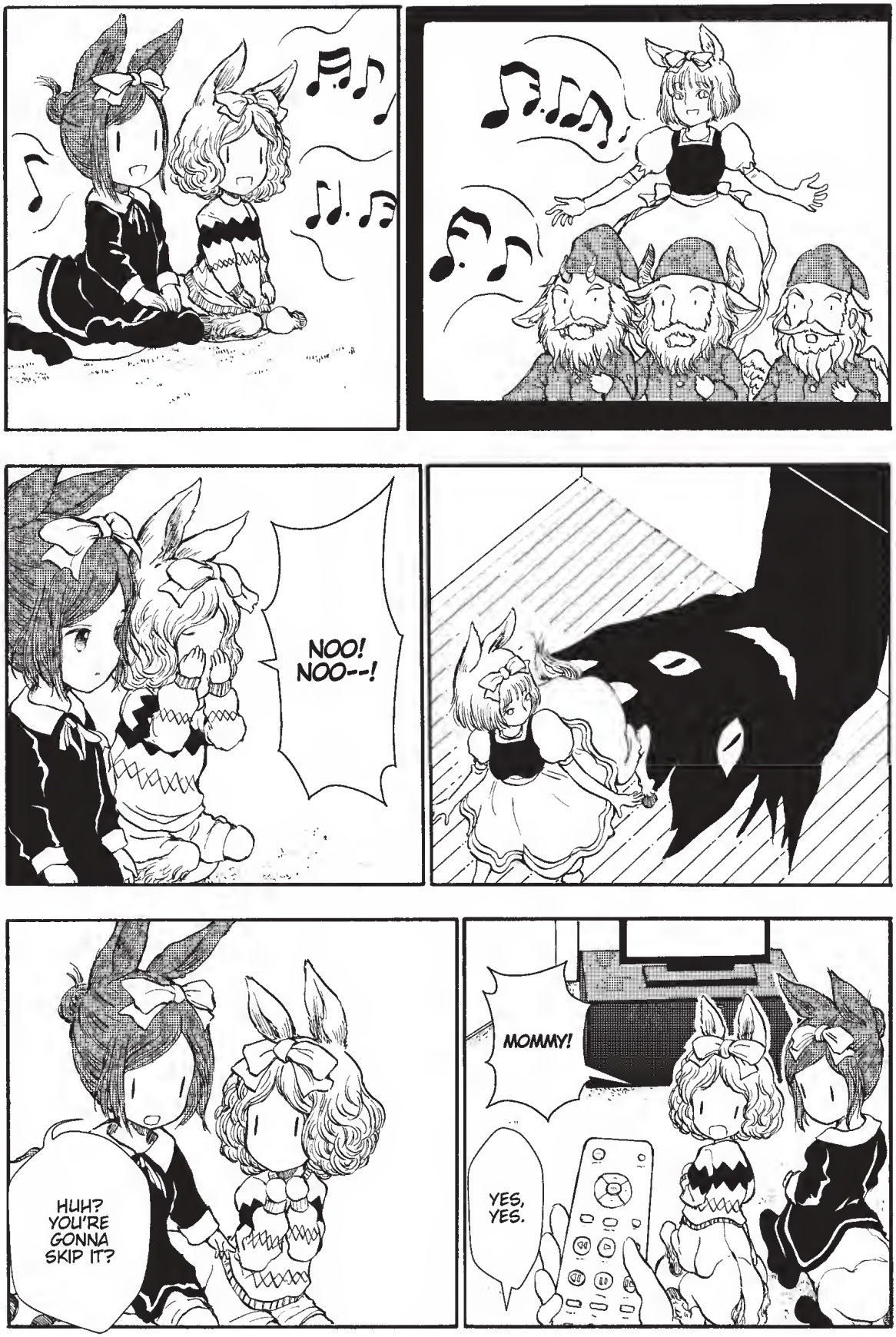

We can spend next Christmas together.
Hee!
HIME-CHAN IS AMAZING.
She says good things.
BECAUSE CHRISTMAS IS THE DAY YOU DO SOMETHING SPECIAL...
...FOR SOMEONE SMALLER THAN YOURSELF.
CLUNK

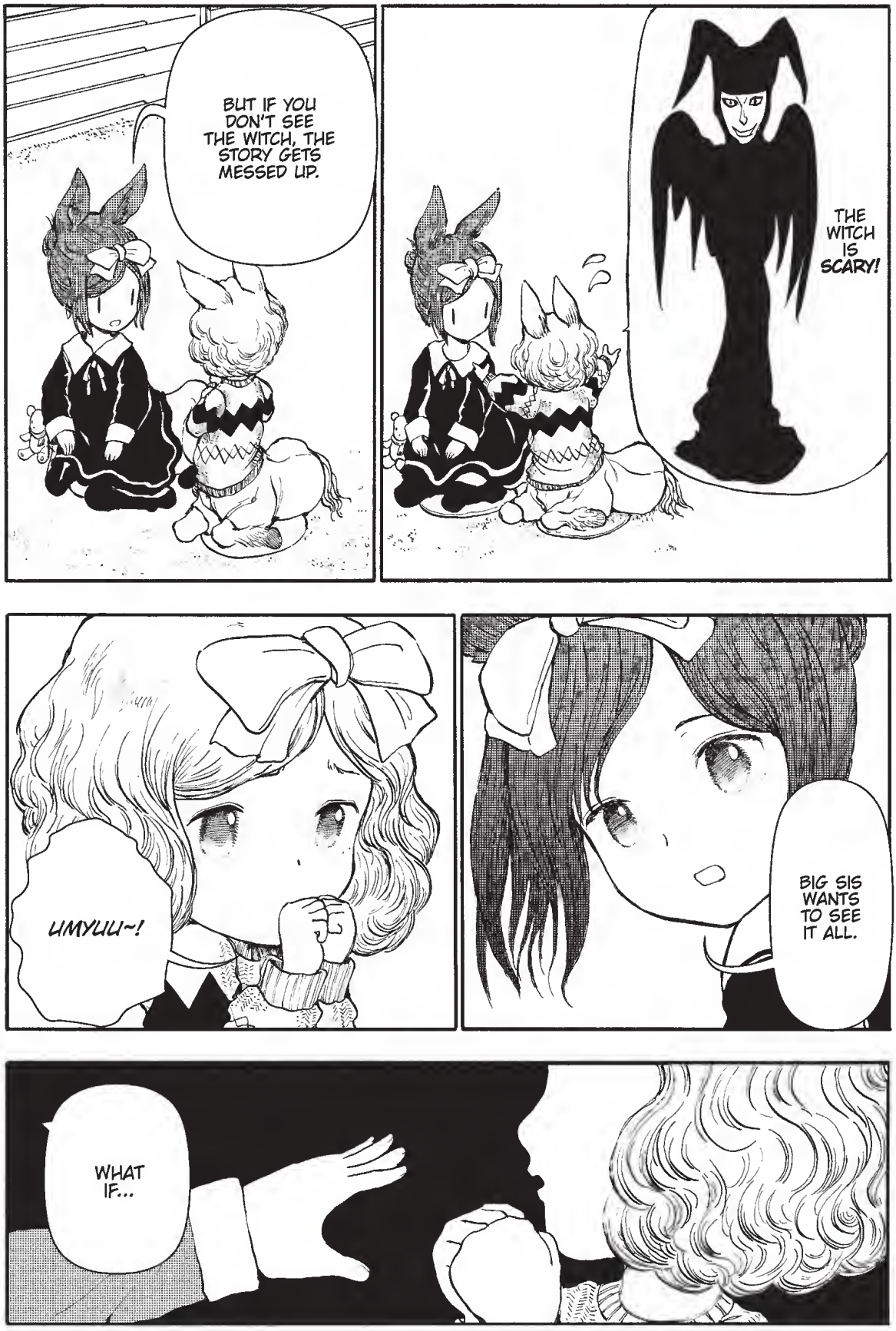
Thank you for always taking care of our Maki-chan.
Oh, my. Thank you.
This isn't much, but please take it.
Thank you very much for inviting us today.
BIG SIS LOOKS LIKE A PWINCESS!
So much food!
POFF POFF
I'LL COME BACK TO PICK HER UP AROUND SEVEN.
UM, THIS IS A PRESENT FOR YOU.

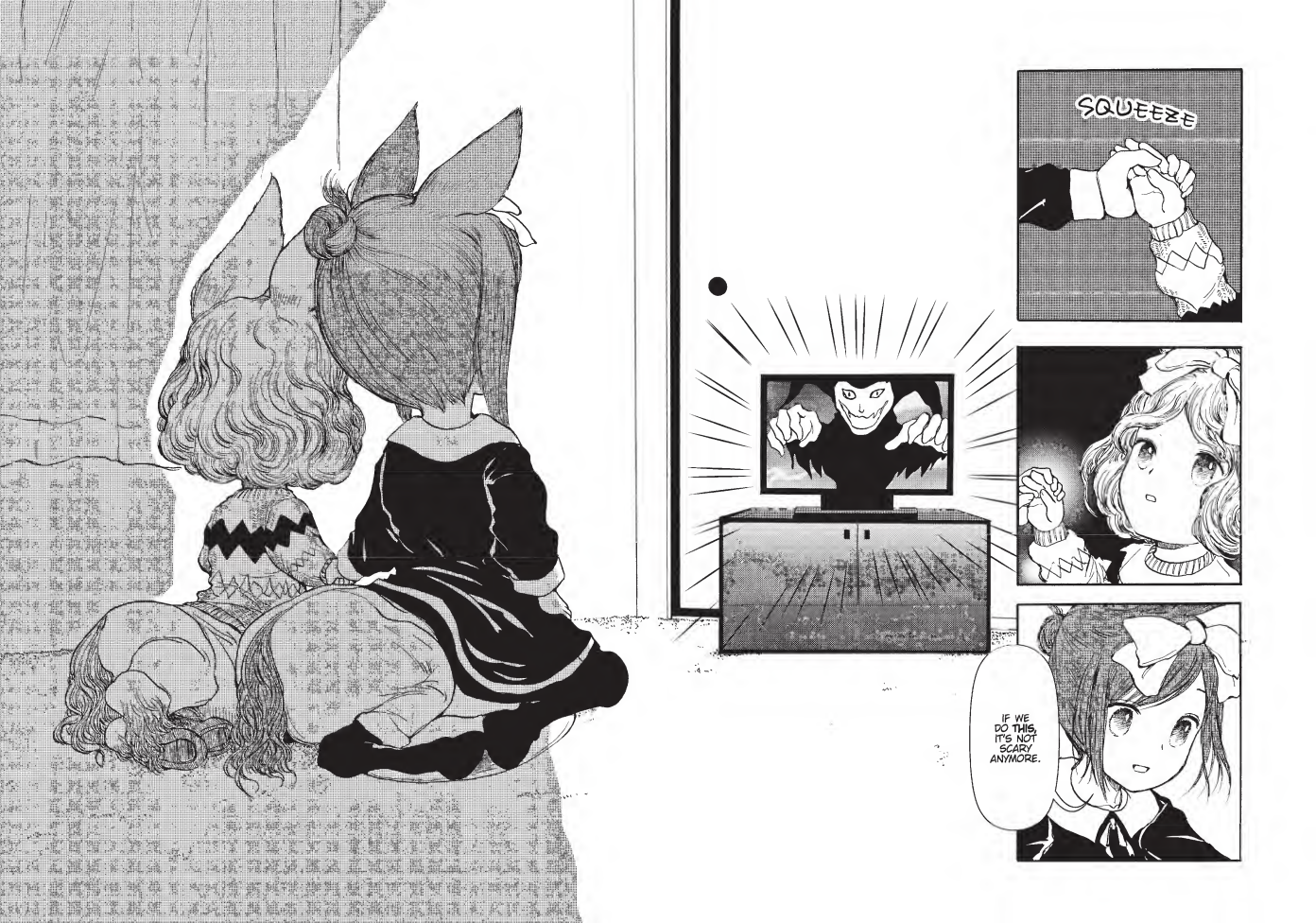

We match.
Thank you!
DASH
Say "ahh"!


Thank you very much for the food.
My, my... so polite!
I'M SO FULL.
IT WAS YUMMY!
DISTINY ANIMATION
Snow White
DVD
THIS.
OKAY, LET'S WATCH! LET'S WATCH!
Pwincess?
BIG SIS, DO YOU WANNA WATCH PWINCESS?

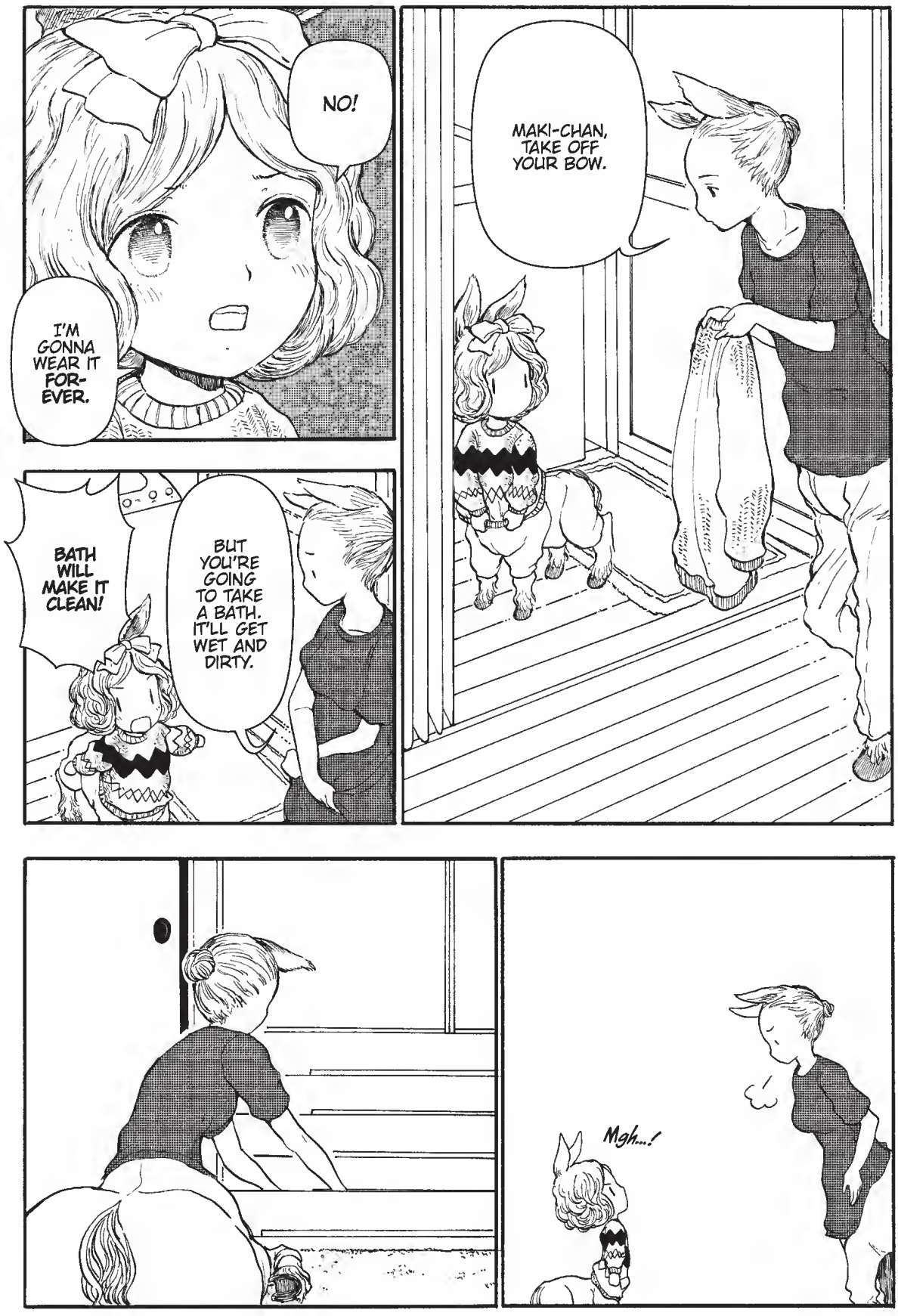

IT LOOKS LIKE MAKI-CHAN IS A PWINCESS!
THE PWINCESS HAS A BOW TOO!

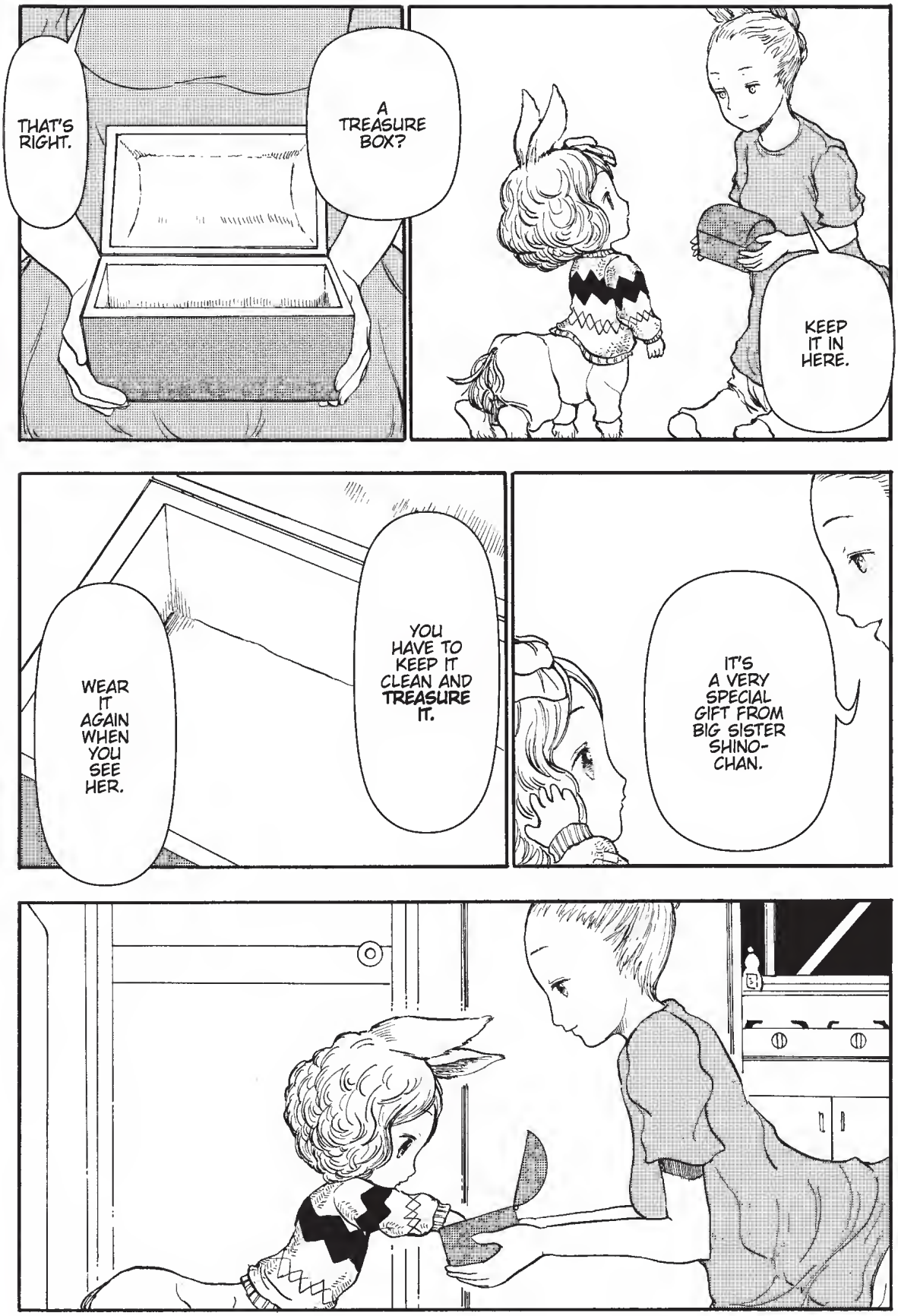

NOO!
NOO--!
MOMMY!
YES,
YES.
HUH?
YOU'RE
GONNA
SKIP IT?

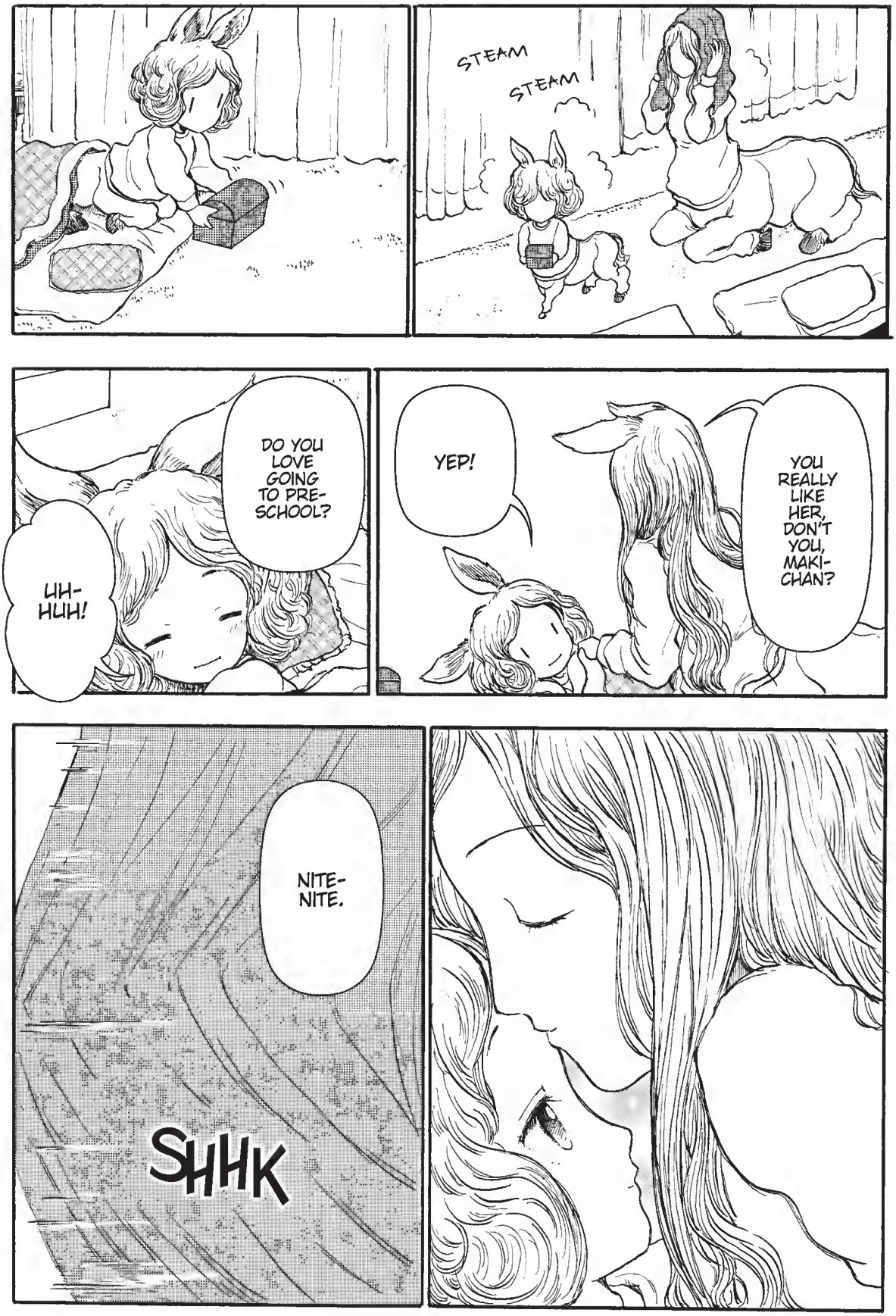

BUT IF YOU DON'T SEE THE WITCH, THE STORY GETS MESSED UP.
THE WITCH IS SCARY!
UMYUU~!
BIG SIS WANTS TO SEE IT ALL.
WHAT IF...

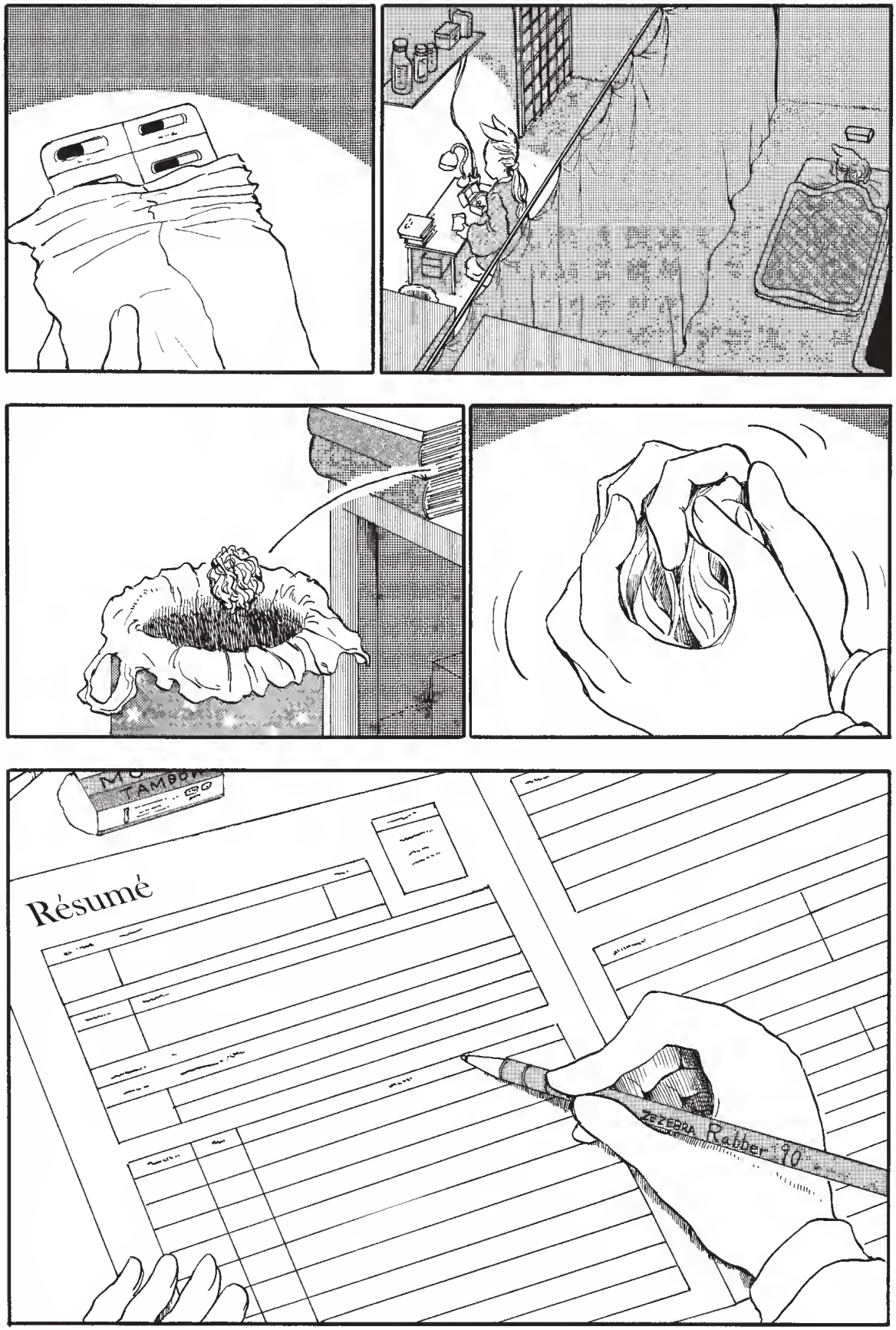

SQUEEZE
IF WE DO THIS, IT'S NOT SCARY ANYMORE.

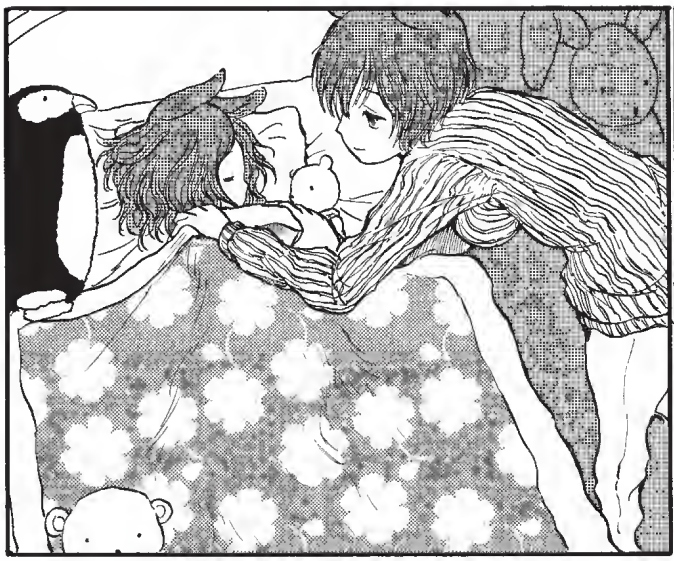
That was fun.
Door
See you later!
Mommy!
VROOM

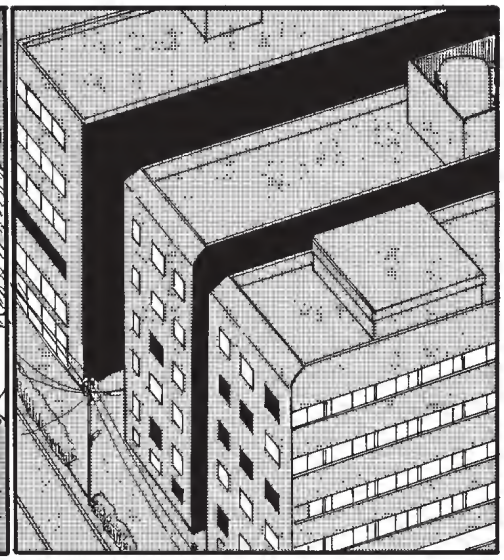

MAKI-CHAN, TAKE OFF YOUR BOW.
NO!
I'M GONNA WEAR IT FOR-EVER.
BUT YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A BATH. IT'LL GET WET AND DIRTY.
BATH WILL MAKE IT CLEAN!
Mgh...!


A TREASURE BOX?
THAT'S RIGHT.
KEEP IT IN HERE.
IT'S A VERY SPECIAL GIFT FROM BIG SISTER SHINO-CHAN.
YOU HAVE TO KEEP IT CLEAN AND TREASURE IT.
WEAR IT AGAIN WHEN YOU SEE HER.

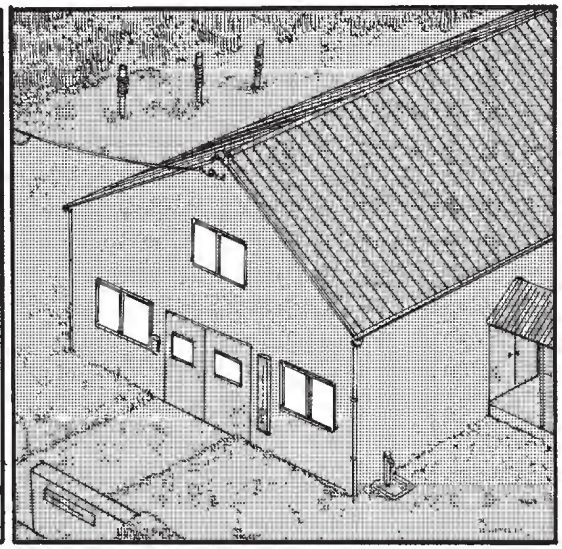

STEAM
STEAM
DO YOU LOVE GOING TO PRE-SCHOOL?
UH-HUH!
YEP!
YOU REALLY LIKE HER, DON'T YOU, MAKI-CHAN?
NITE-NITE.
SHHK

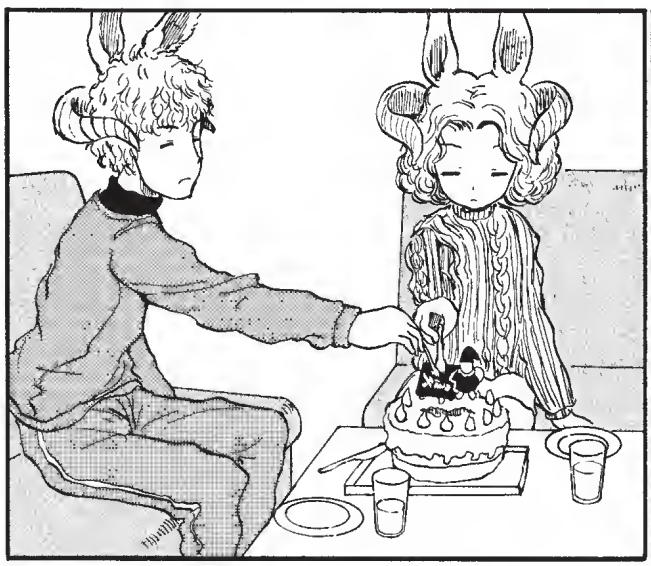

TAMPRA
80
Résumé
ZEBRA Rubber 90

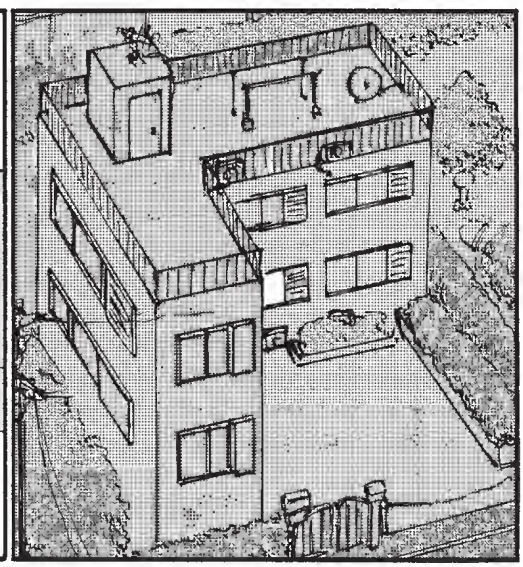


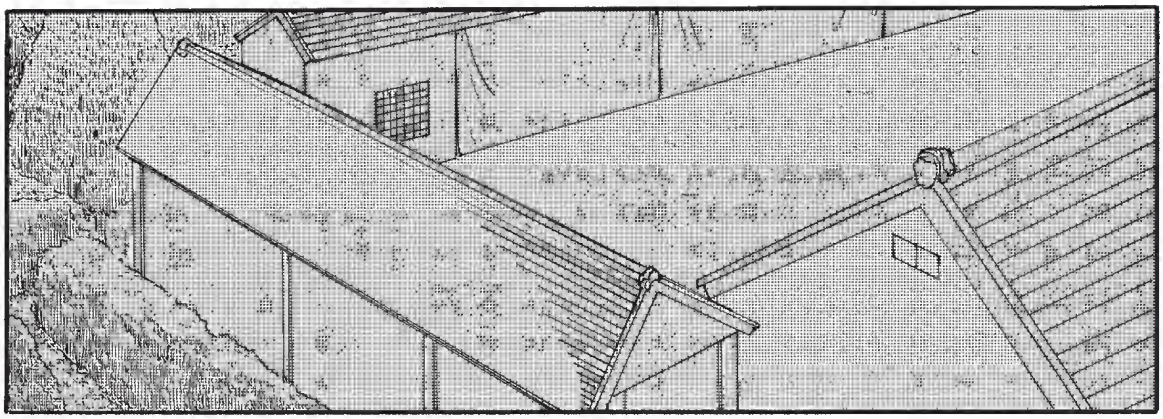


Yeah!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
Wah ha ha ha!
JUMP
BANG





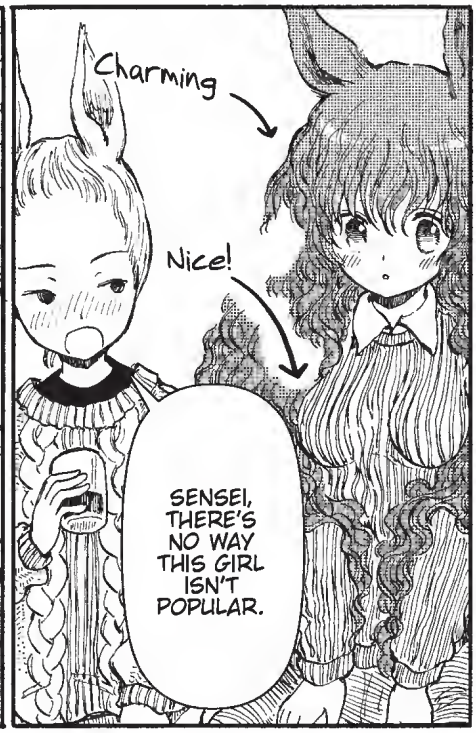




That's a problem.
YOU ALL SHOULD DRINK, TOO! YOU SHOULD FEEL LIKE DRINKING IF YOU'RE HERE!
NO, I'M UNDER-AGE.

SENSEI, AREN'T YOU DRINKING TOO MUCH?

AYAKA-CHAN, THAT'S NOT...
WHERE IN THE WORLD IS HAPPINESS?
I'M SURE IT'S CLOSE BY!
IT'S JUICE. 100% FRUIT JUICE.
I'm only in middle school.


Charming
Nice!
SENSEI, THERE'S NO WAY THIS GIRL ISN'T POPULAR.

A CentaUr's Life

# MESOZOIC CREATURES

## DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: THE GIGANTIFICATION OF DINOSAURS

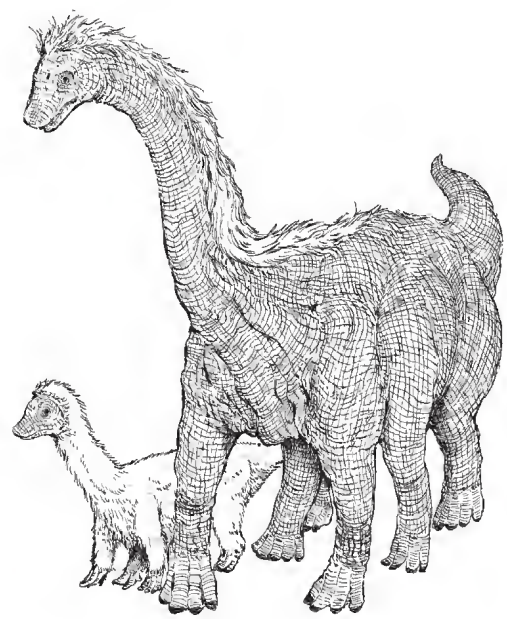
ONE REASON FOR DINOSAURS' POPULARITY, AND INDEED THEIR MOST EYE-CATCHING TRAIT, IS SURELY THEIR ENORMOUS SIZE. THE AVERAGE TYRANNOSAURUS WAS ESTIMATED AT THIRTEEN METERS TALL, WITH SAUROPODS SUCH AS THE SUPERSAURUS REACHING ANYWHERE FROM THIRTY TO SIXTY METERS TALL. OF COURSE THERE WERE ALSO SMALL DINOSAURS SUCH AS THE COMPSOGNATHUS, BUT EVEN THEY COULD REACH UP TO 70 CENTIMETERS AT FULL MATURITY, MAKING THEM FAIRLY LARGE CREATURES, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

AN ADVANTAGE OF THEIR LARGE SIZE IS THAT IT BECAME MORE DIFFICULT FOR OTHER SPECIES TO ATTACK THEM. YOU MAY ASK WHY, THEN, DON'T ALL SPECIES GROW LARGE? THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS THAT DIFFERENT CREATURES HAVE DIFFERENT NICHES TO FILL, MEANING THAT THERE ARE ALSO MERITS TO BEING SMALL. FOR EXAMPLE, HAWKS AND LIONS DO NOT COMPETE FOR FOOD WITH SPARROWS AND MICE, MEANING THAT THESE SPECIES ARE NOT IN COMPETITION OVER THE SAME ECOLOGICAL NICHE. MEANWHILE, YOUNG ARE REARED AND NOURISHED BY FULL-GROWN ADULTS, MEANING THAT THEY DON'T HAVE TO COMPETE WITH SMALLER SPECIES.

THAT SAID, IT IS THOUGHT THAT, AMONG DINOSAURS, THE YOUNG CARRIED OUT THE SAME LIFESTYLE AS THE FULLY GROWN. THIS MEANT THAT FOR DINOSAURS, BIGGER TRULY WAS BETTER. SMALLER SPECIES WOULD WIND UP COMPETING WITH THE YOUNG OF LARGER SPECIES OVER THE SAME ECOLOGICAL NICHE, ROBBING SMALLNESS OF ANY MERIT. MANY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS WHAT LED TO DINOSAURS GROWING IN SIZE AS AN OVERALL GROUP.

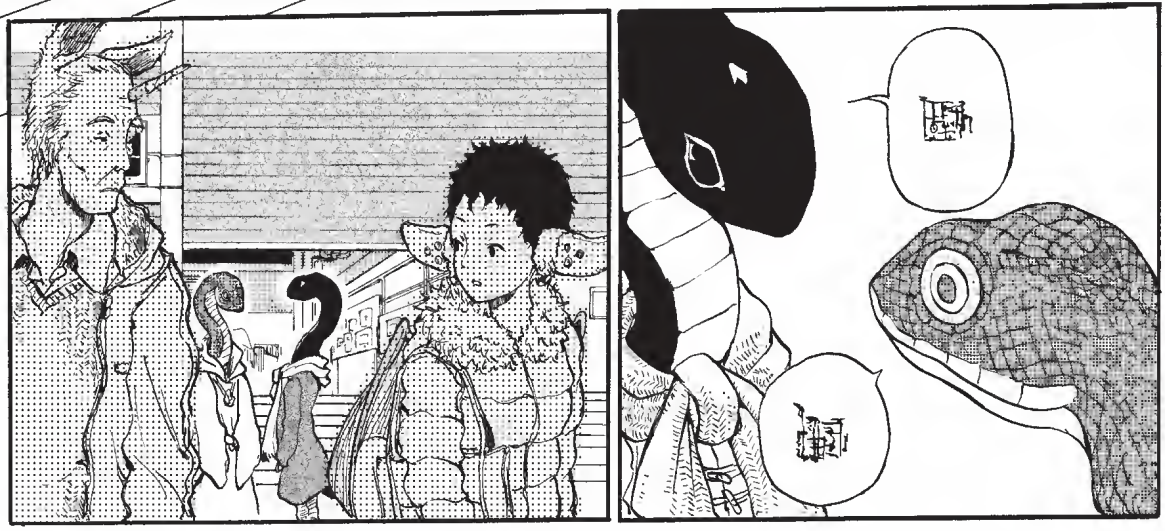
### DIPLODOCUS

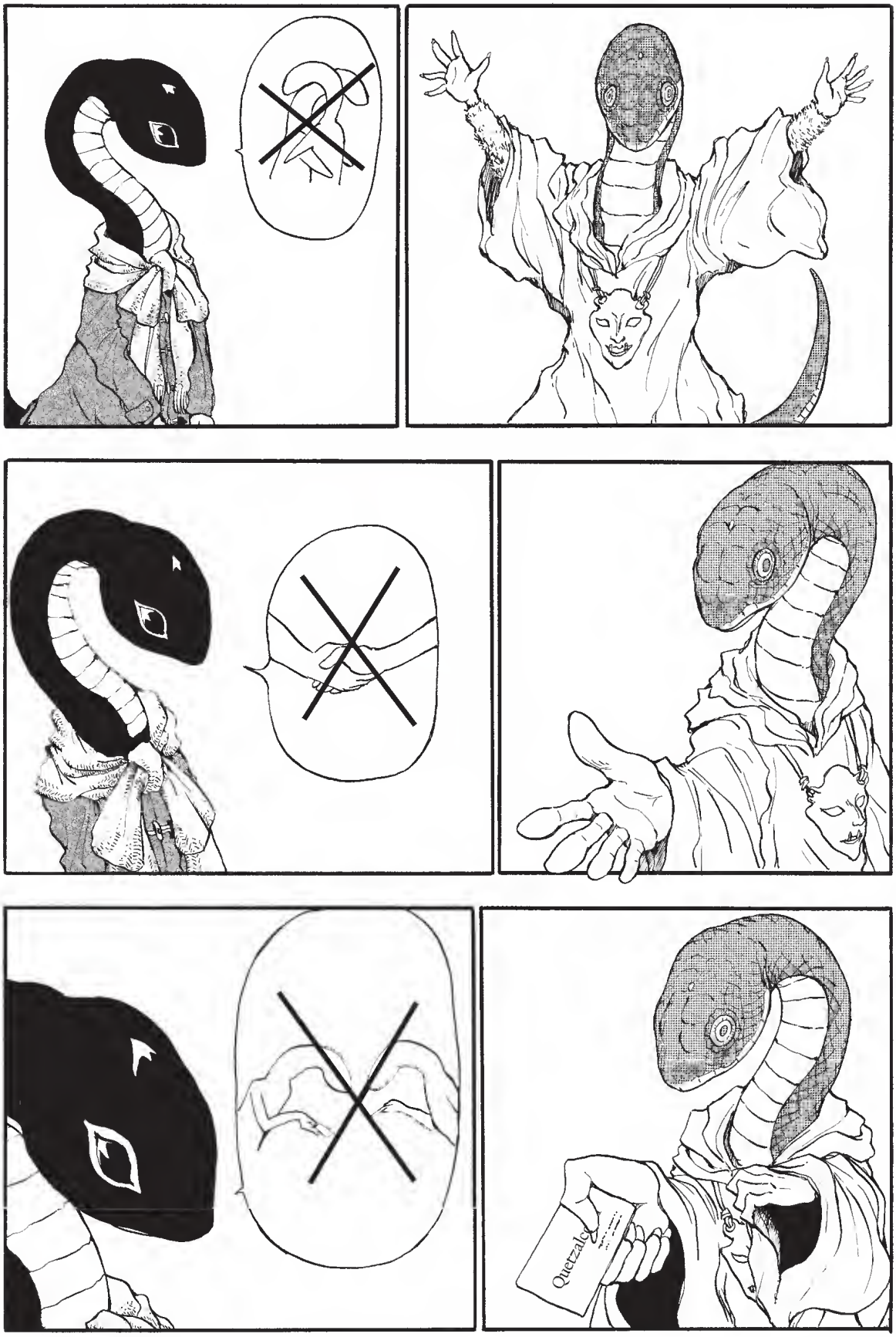
AN HERBIVOROUS SAUROPOD WHICH THRIVED DURING THE LATE JURASSIC PERIOD. THEY RANGED FROM TWENTY TO THIRTY-FIVE METERS IN LENGTH, WITH A LONG NECK AND TAIL. THEY PROBABLY USED THEIR PENCIL-LIKE TEETH TO PULL LEAVES FROM TREES AND SWALLOW THEM WHOLE, THEN USED GASTROLITHS (STOMACH STONES) TO BREAK THEM DOWN AND AID DIGESTION.



10:00

# CHAPTER 25



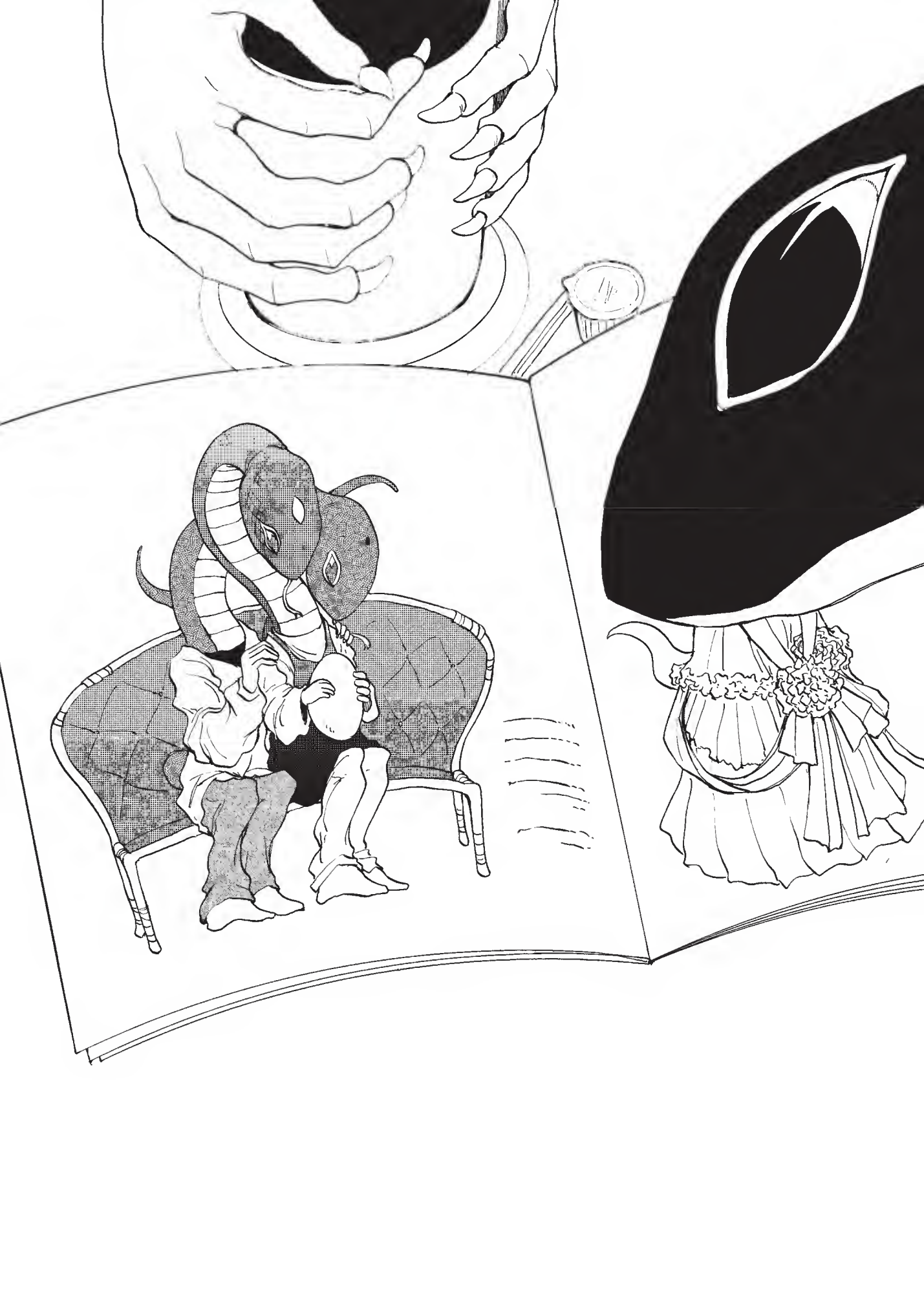


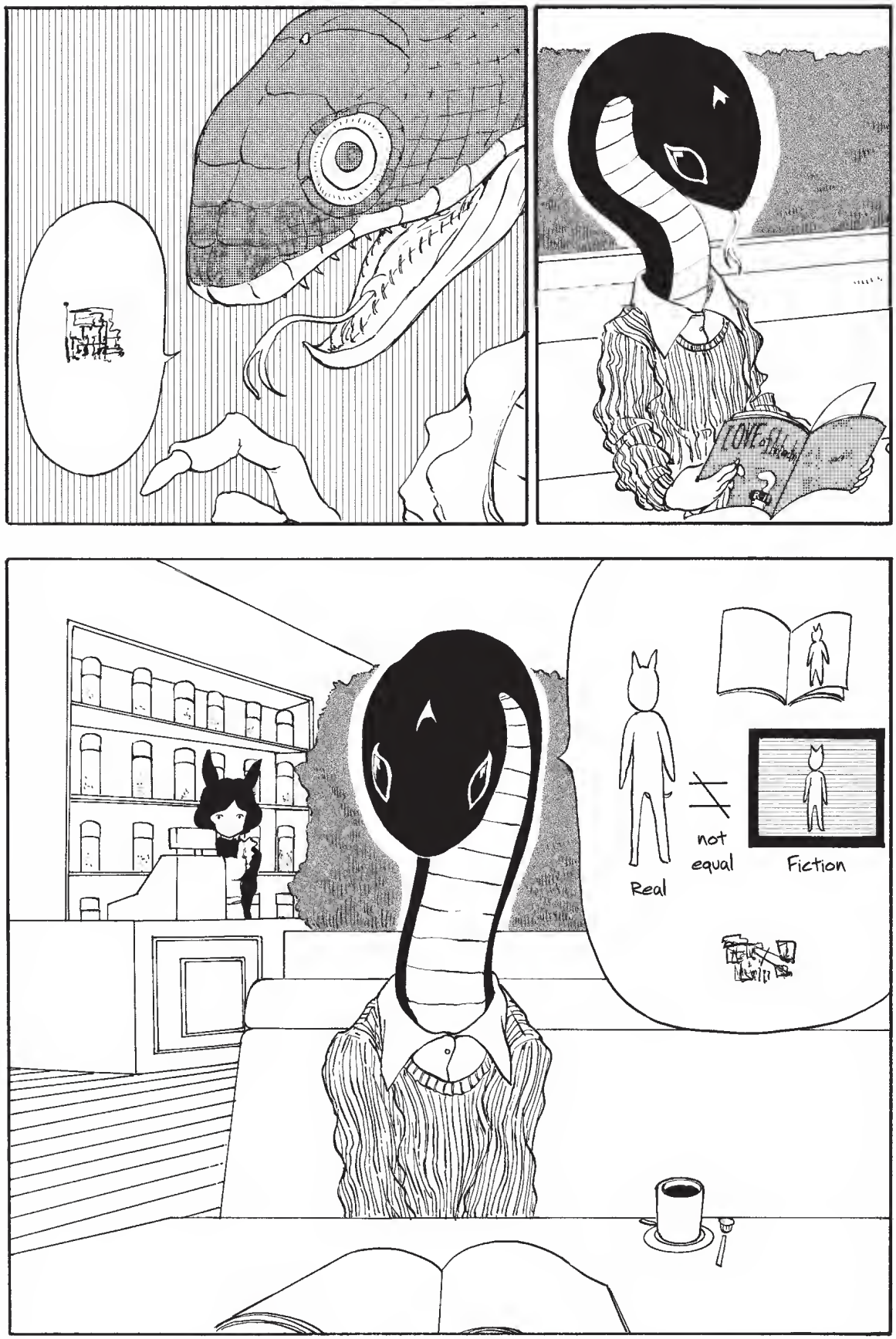

*In Japan, business cards should be given with both hands.*

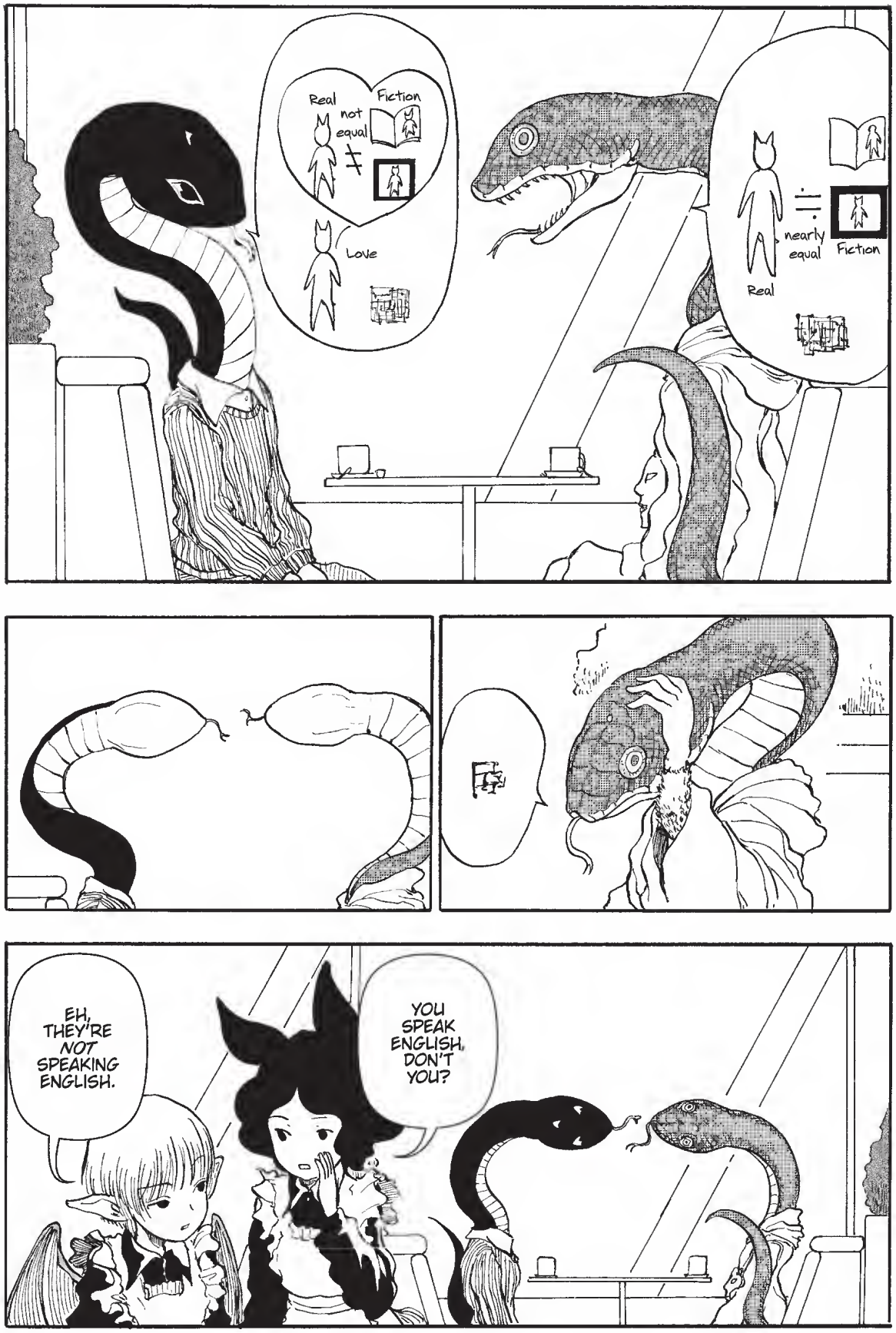
COFFEE
I WOULD LIKE TO ORDER TWO COFFEES.
AH! R-RIGHT AWAY.

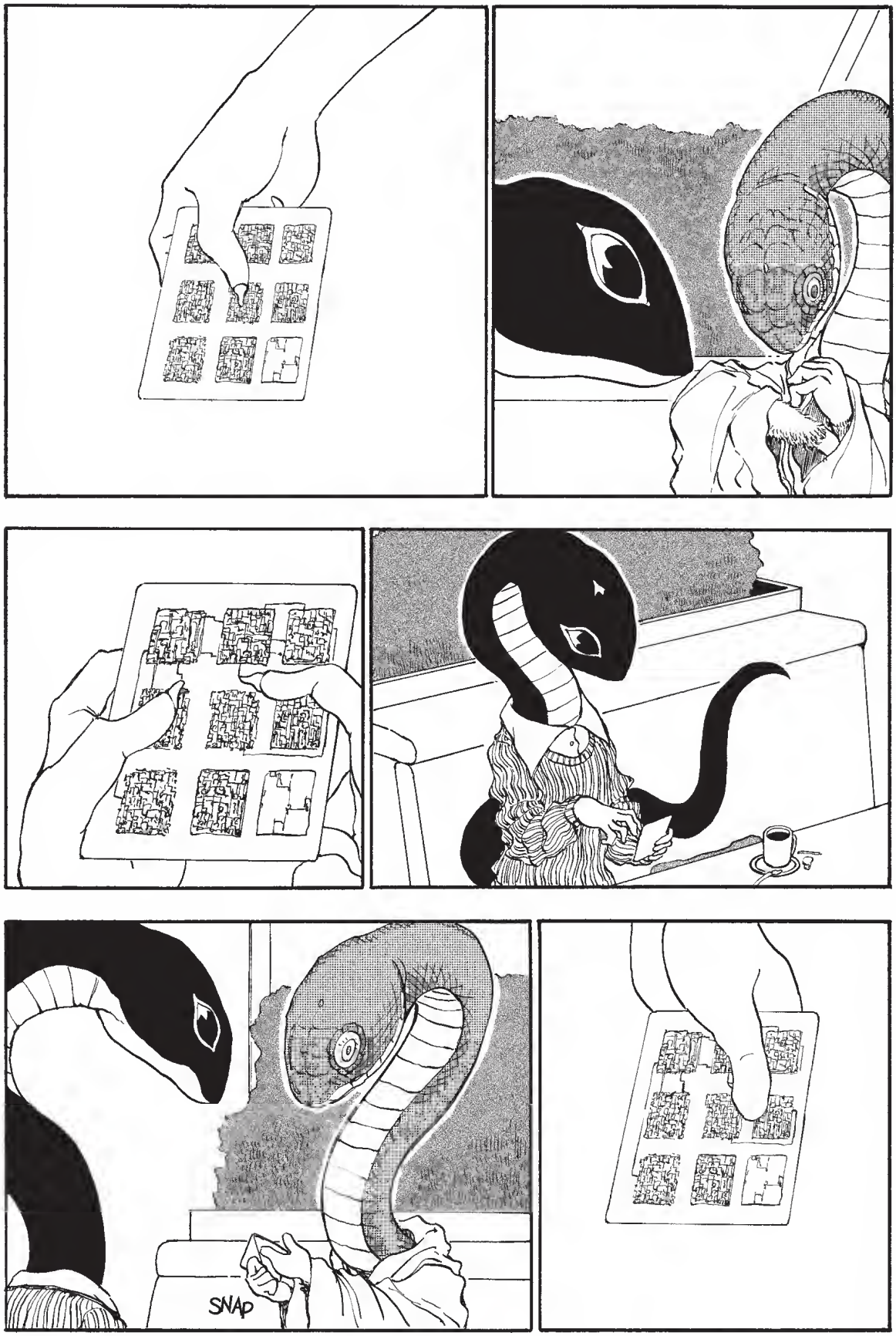
WAIT
WAIT
ﾌｰｰﾌｰｰ

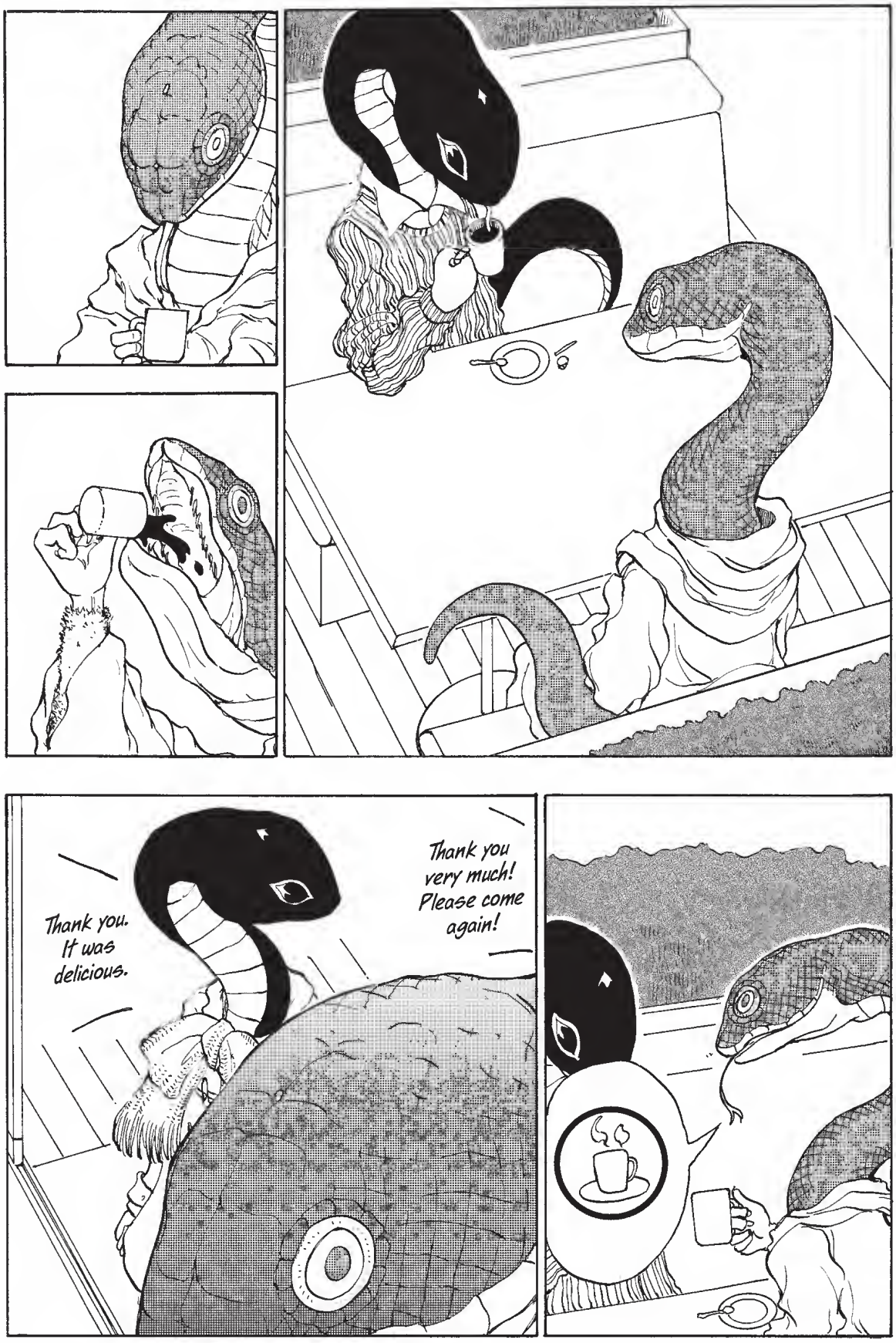
Japan STYLE
R-18
LOVE of Antonciaco
FLOP




Real
not equal
Fiction


Real
not equal
Fiction
Love
Real
nearly equal
Fiction
EH, THEY'RE NOT SPEAKING ENGLISH.
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH, DON'T YOU?


SNAP


Thank you. It was delicious.
Thank you very much! Please come again!

HOW WAS IT? DID IT FEEL NOSTALGIC?
HE DID.
I SEE. SO YOUR BUDDY CAME TO VISIT.
WHAT? YOU JUST SAW ME THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY!
HONESTLY SPEAKING, I FEEL MORE NOSTALGIC BEING WITH YOU AGAIN.

A CentaUr's Life

# MESOZOIC CREATURES

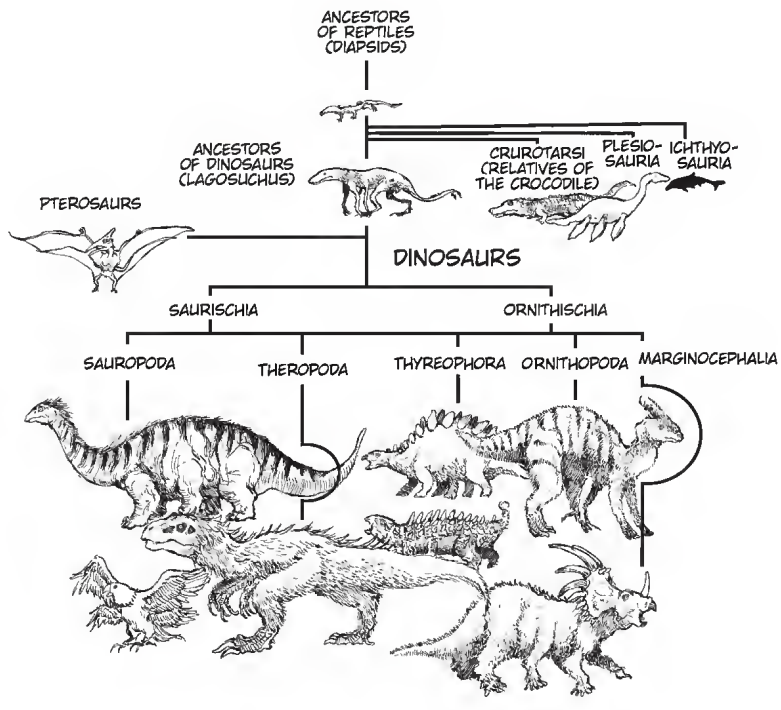
## DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: DINOSAUR LINEAGE

WE USE THE WORD "DINOSAUR" QUITE BROADLY TO REPRESENT A VAST VARIETY OF SPECIES, SPANNING SEVERAL SEPARATE LINEAGES. THERE ARE VARIOUS THEORIES ON HOW THOSE LINEAGES ARE DIVIDED, BUT HERE WE WILL BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE THE MOSTLY COMMONLY ACCEPTED THEORY.

FIRST, DINOSAURS ARE WIDELY DIVIDED AMONGST TWO ORDERS: SAURISCHIA AND ORNITHISCHIA. IN GENERAL, THIS CLASSIFICATION IS DETERMINED BY THE DIRECTION OF THE PUBIC BONE ON THE PELVIS--IF IT POINTS FORWARD, THEY ARE SAURISCHIANS; IF IT POINTS BACKWARD, THEY ARE ORNITHISCHIANS.

SAURISCHIANS ARE FURTHERMORE DIVIDED INTO THEROPODS SUCH AS THE TYRANNOSAURUS, ALLOSAURUS, AND VELOCIRAPTOR, AND SAUROPODS LIKE THE BRACHIOSAURUS, DIPLODOCUS, AND SUPERSAURUS.

ORNITHISCHIANS, MEANWHILE, ARE DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL GROUPS: THYREOPHORA LIKE THE STEGOSAURUS AND ANKYLOSAURUS, ORNITHOPODS SUCH AS THE HADROSAUR AND PARASAUROLOPHUS (SO-CALLED "DUCK-BILLED DINOSAURS"), PACHYCEPHALOSAURIDS SUCH AS THE PACHYCEPHALOSAURUS (SO-CALLED "HEAD-BUTTING DINOSAURS"), AND MARGINOCEPHALIA, WHICH INCLUDED CERATOPSIANS LIKE THE TRICERATOPS AND STYRACOSAURUS.



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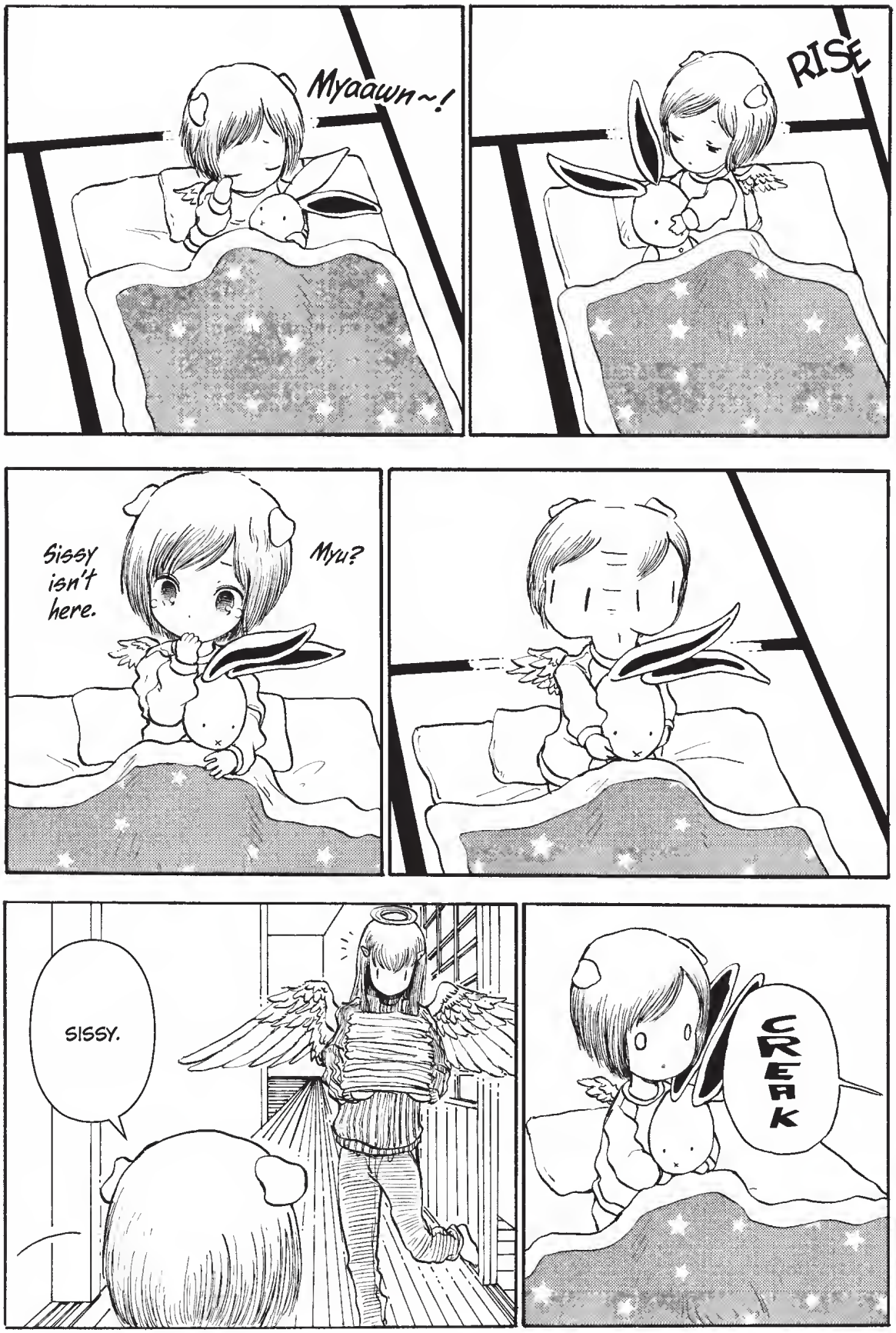
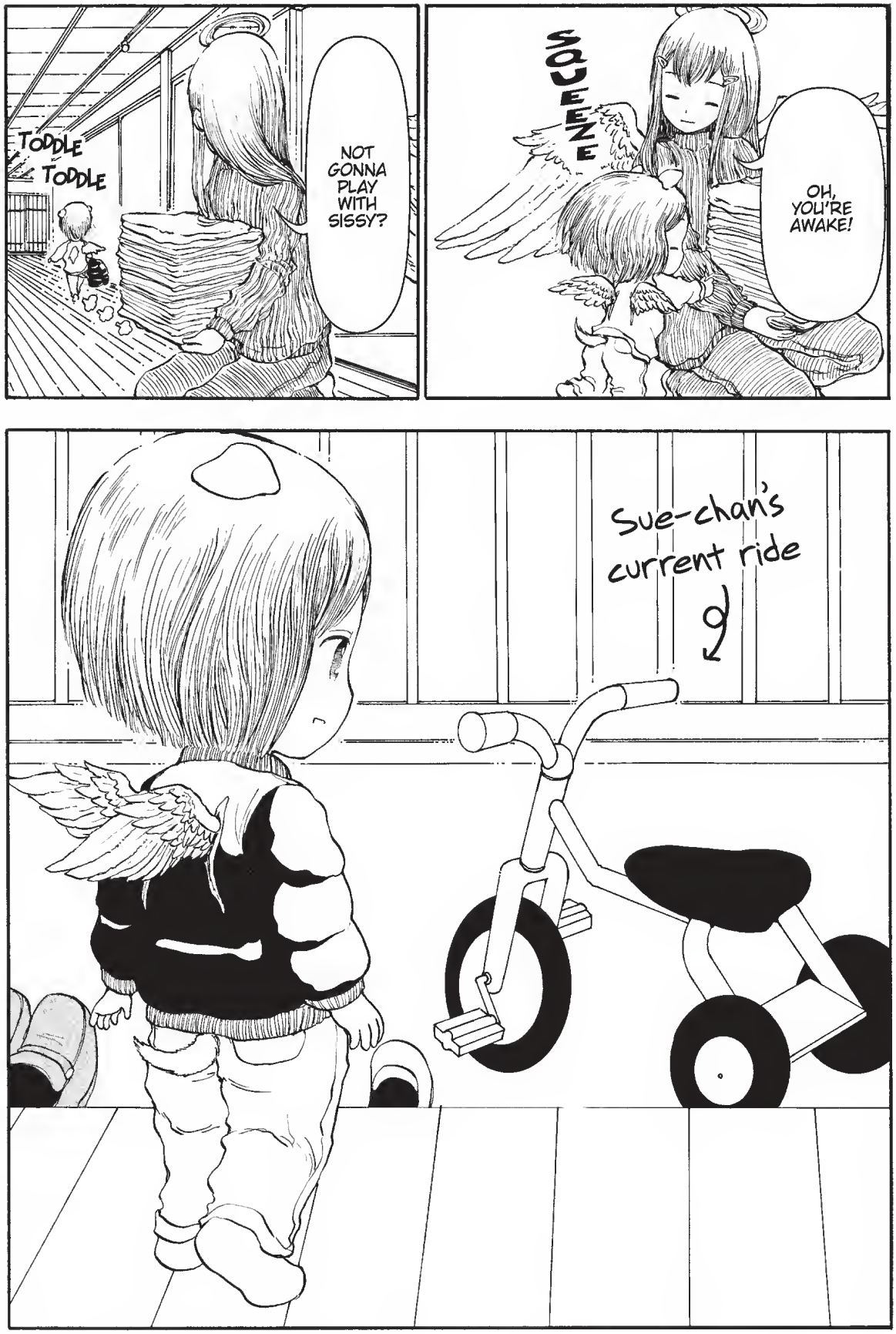
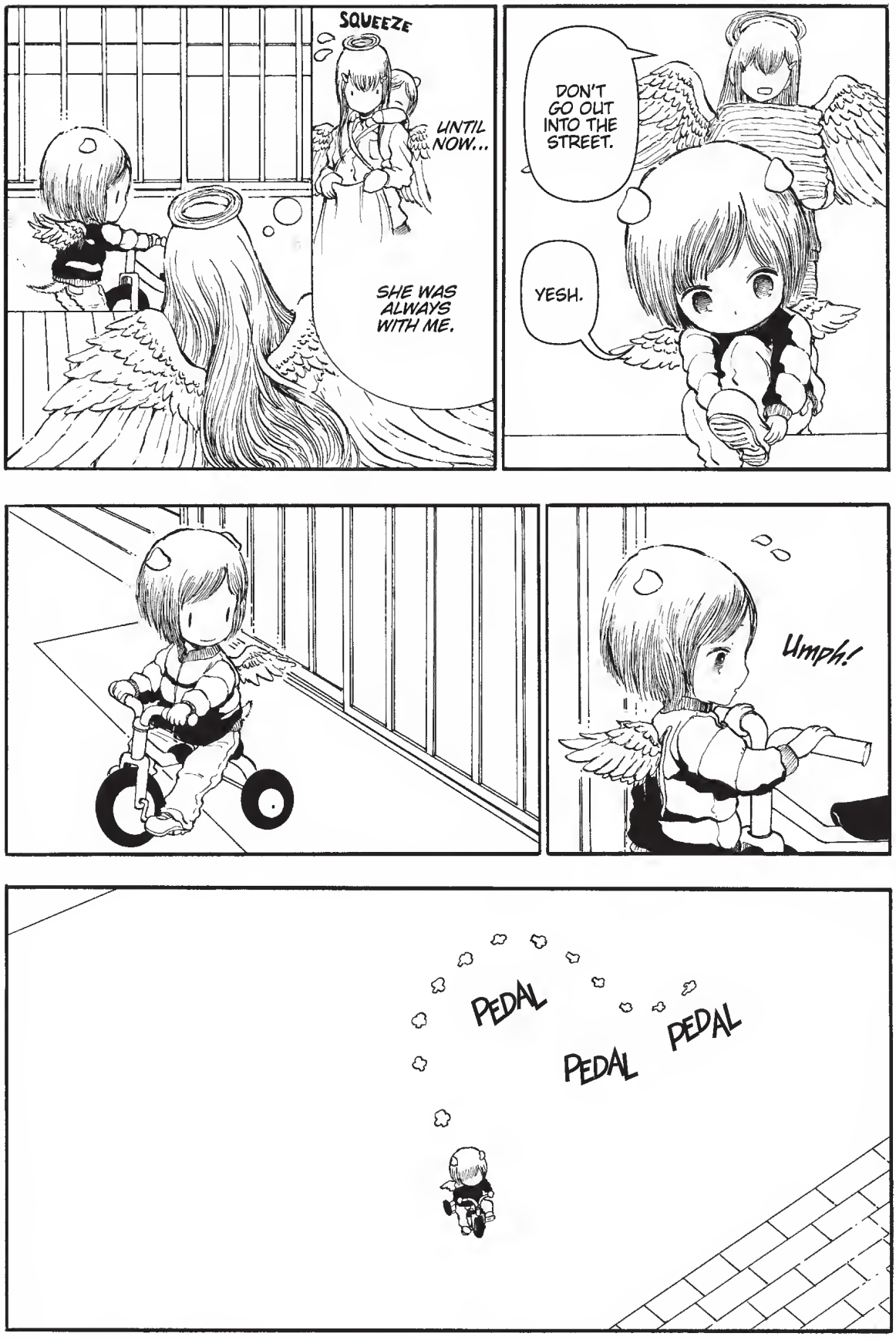
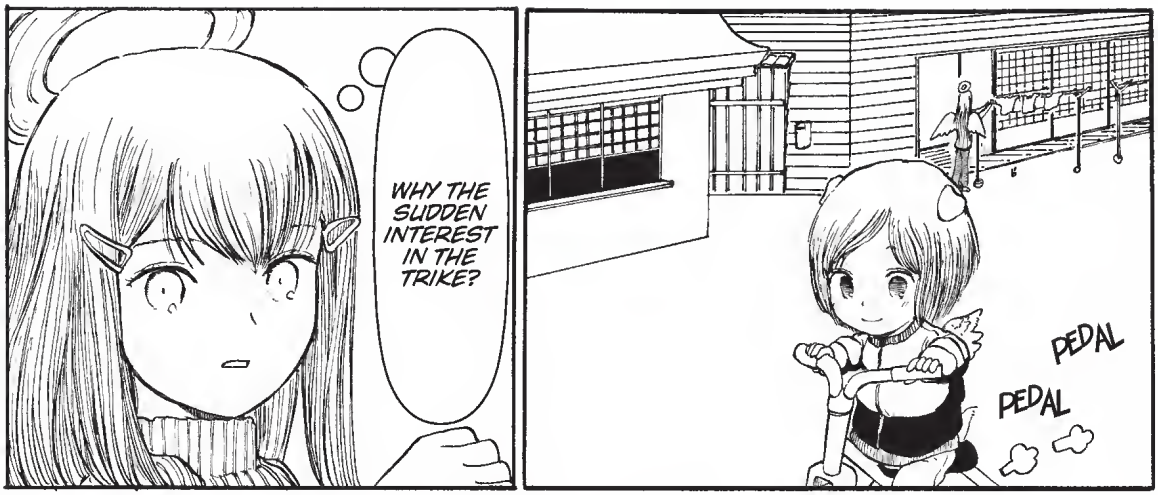
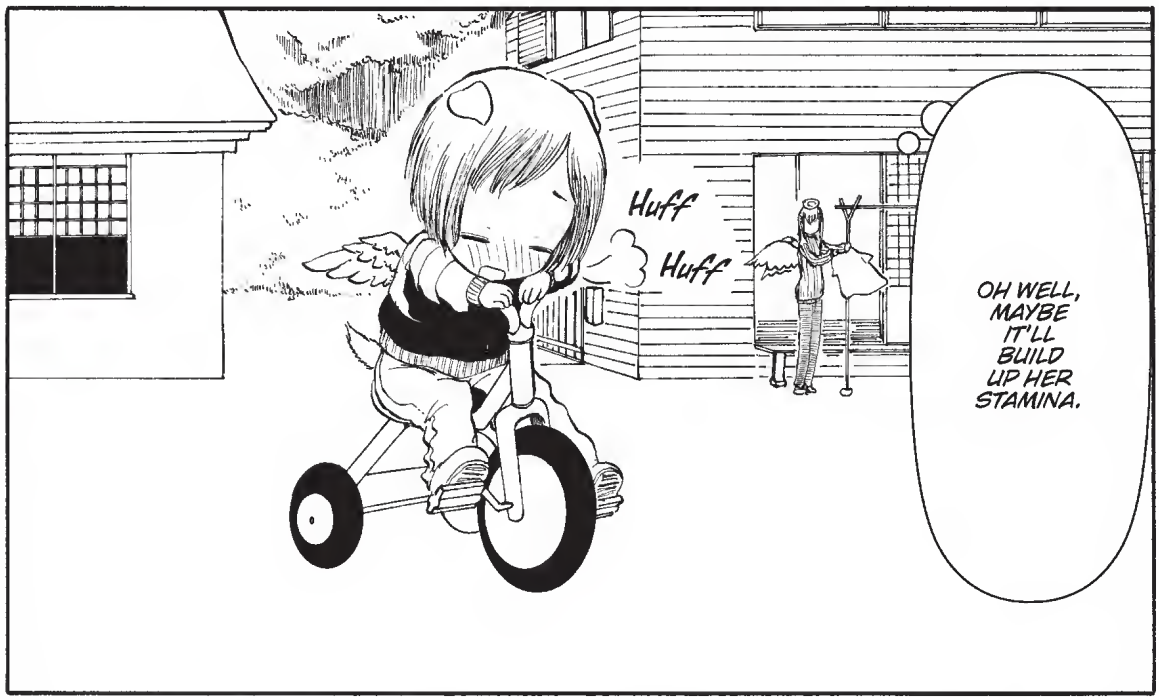
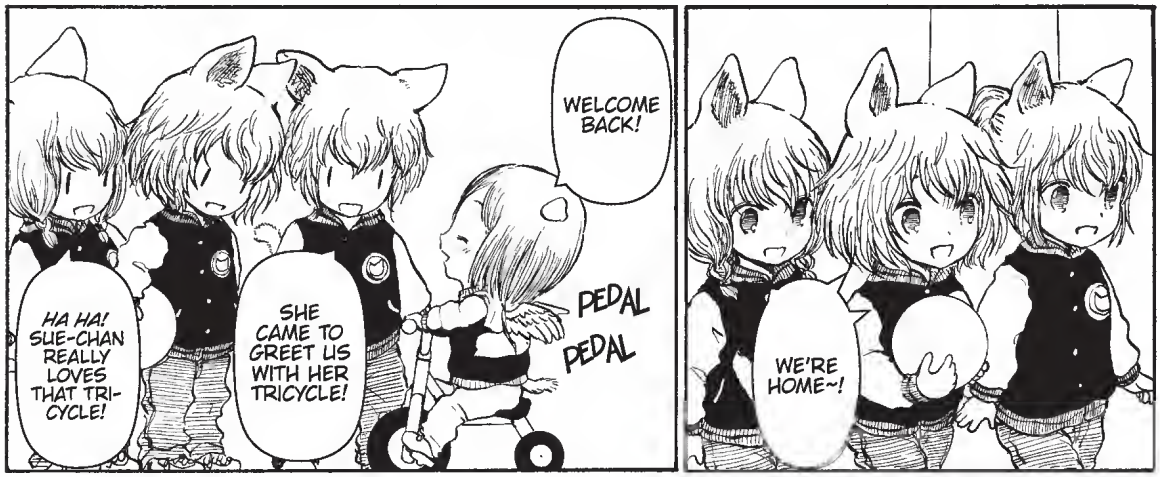

Myaawn~!
RISE
Sissy isn't here.
Myu?
CREAK
SISSY.


TODDLE
TODDLE
NOT GONNA PLAY WITH SISSY?
SQUEEZE
OH, YOU'RE AWAKE!
Sue-chan's current ride

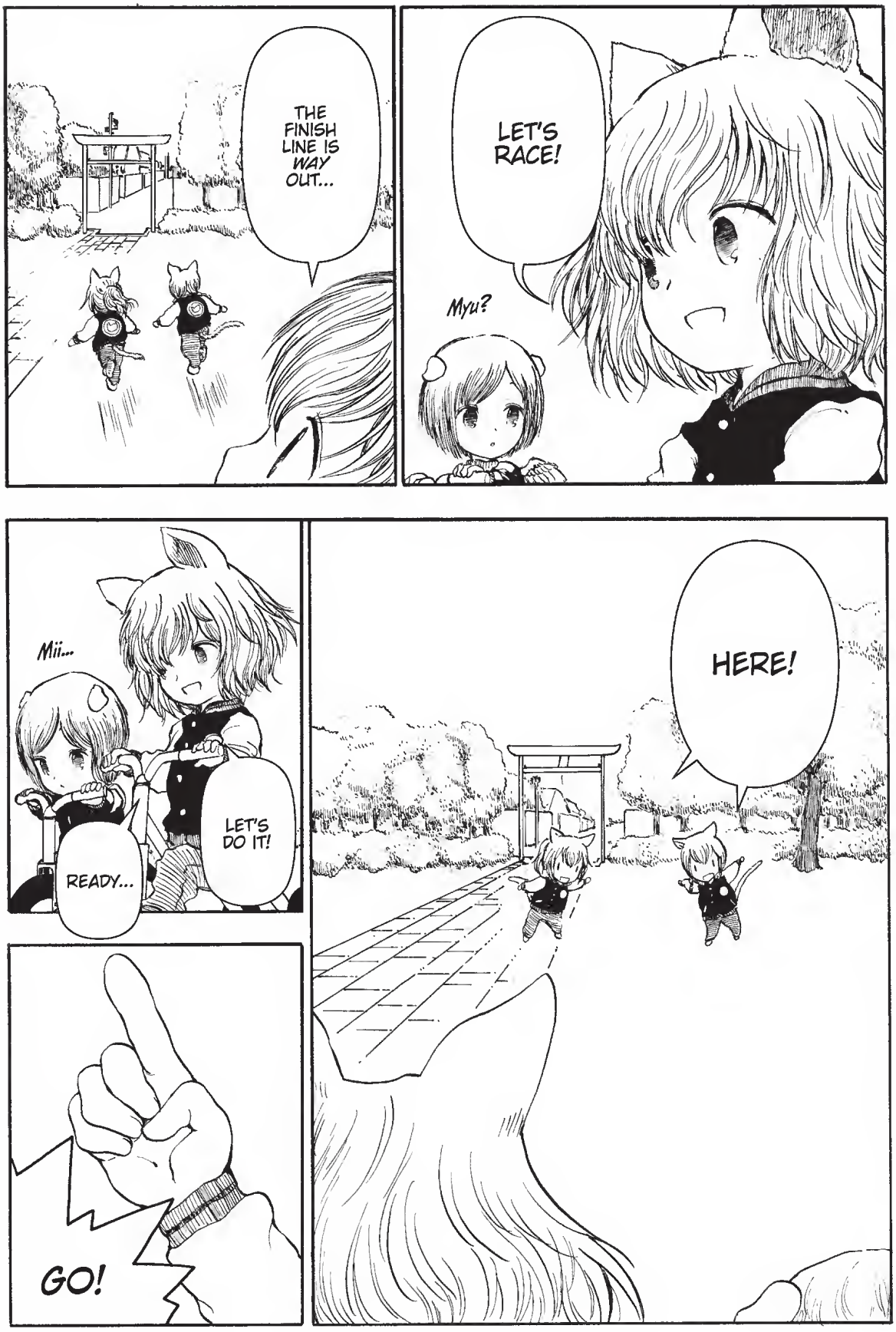

SQUEEZE
UNTIL NOW...
SHE WAS ALWAYS WITH ME.
DON'T GO OUT INTO THE STREET.
YESH.
Umph!
PEDAL
PEDAL
PEDAL


WHY THE SUDDEN INTEREST IN THE TRIKE?
PEDAL
PEDAL

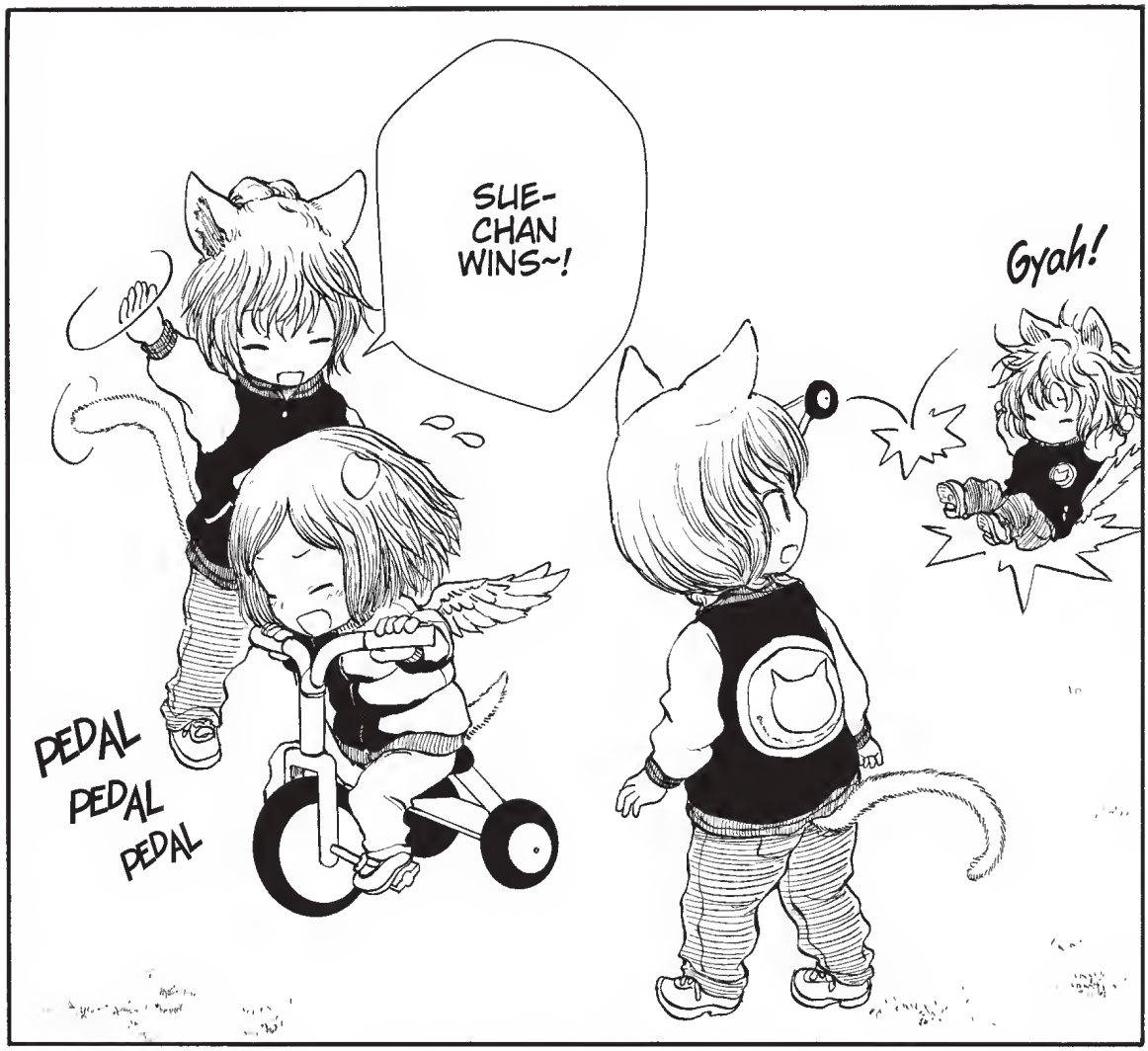

Huff
Huff
OH WELL, MAYBE IT'LL BUILD UP HER STAMINA.

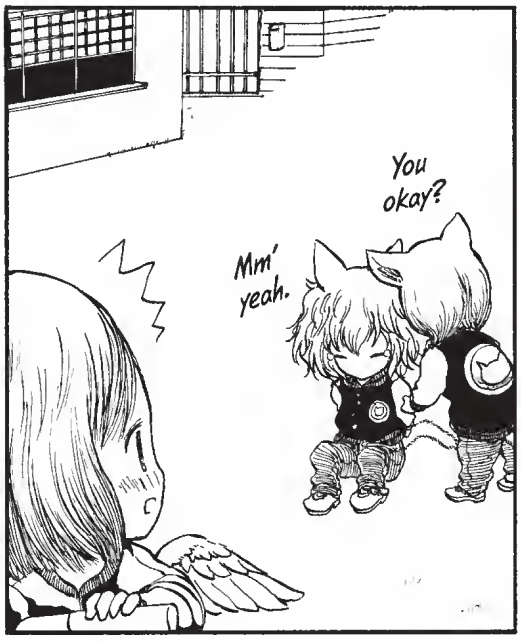

HA HA! SUE-CHAN REALLY LOVES THAT TRI-CYCLE!
SHE CAME TO GREET US WITH HER TRICYCLE!
WELCOME BACK!
PEDAL
PEDAL
WE'RE HOME~!

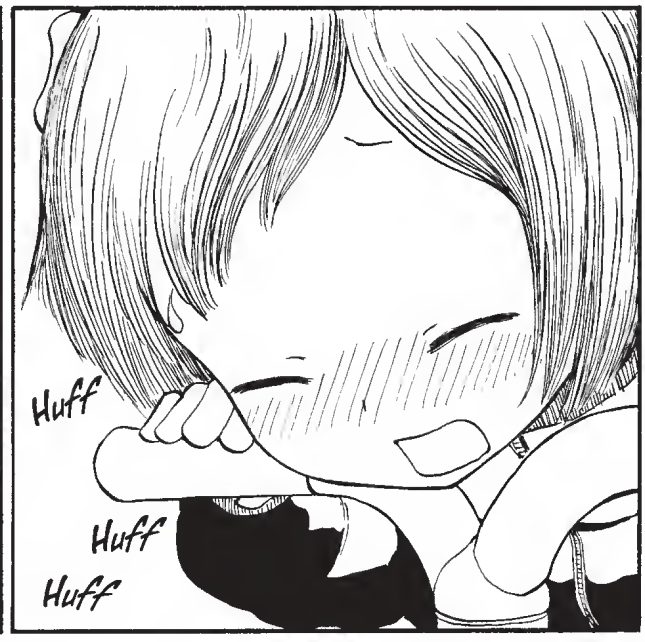
BIG SIS WILL RIDE ON A TRICYCLE, TOO!
Aw, the red part is all rusty.
Was it this small?
MY LEGS HIT THE BAR...
Myu...
SQUEAK
SQUEAK

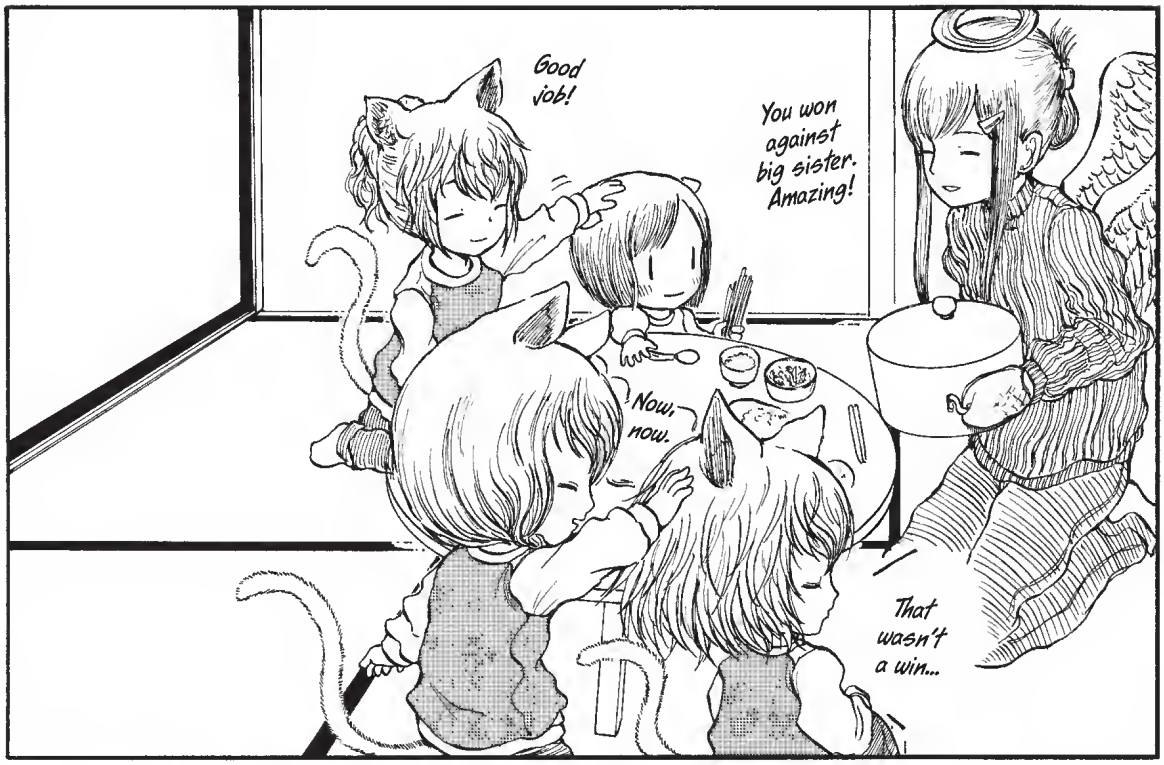

THE FINISH LINE IS WAY OUT...
LET'S RACE!
Myu?
Mii...
READY...
LET'S DO IT!
HERE!
GO!

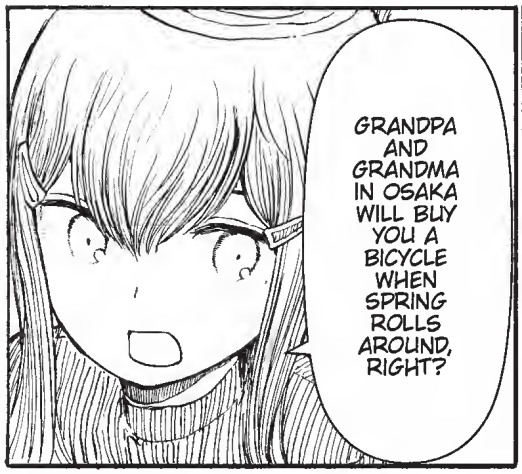
CLUNK
PEDAL PEDAL PEDAL PEDAL
WOBBLE


SUE-CHAN WINS~!
Gyah!
PEDAL
PEDAL
PEDAL

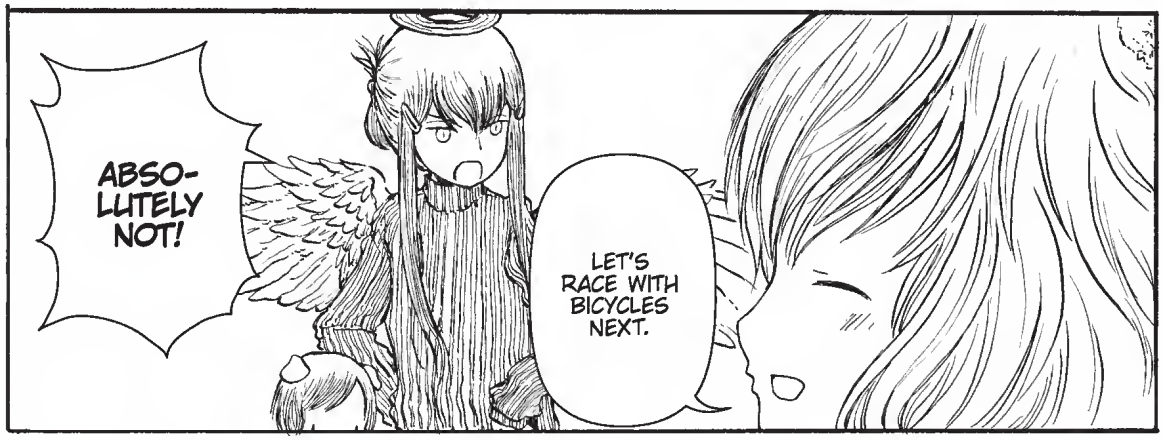

You okay?
Mm' yeah.


Huff
Huff
Huff

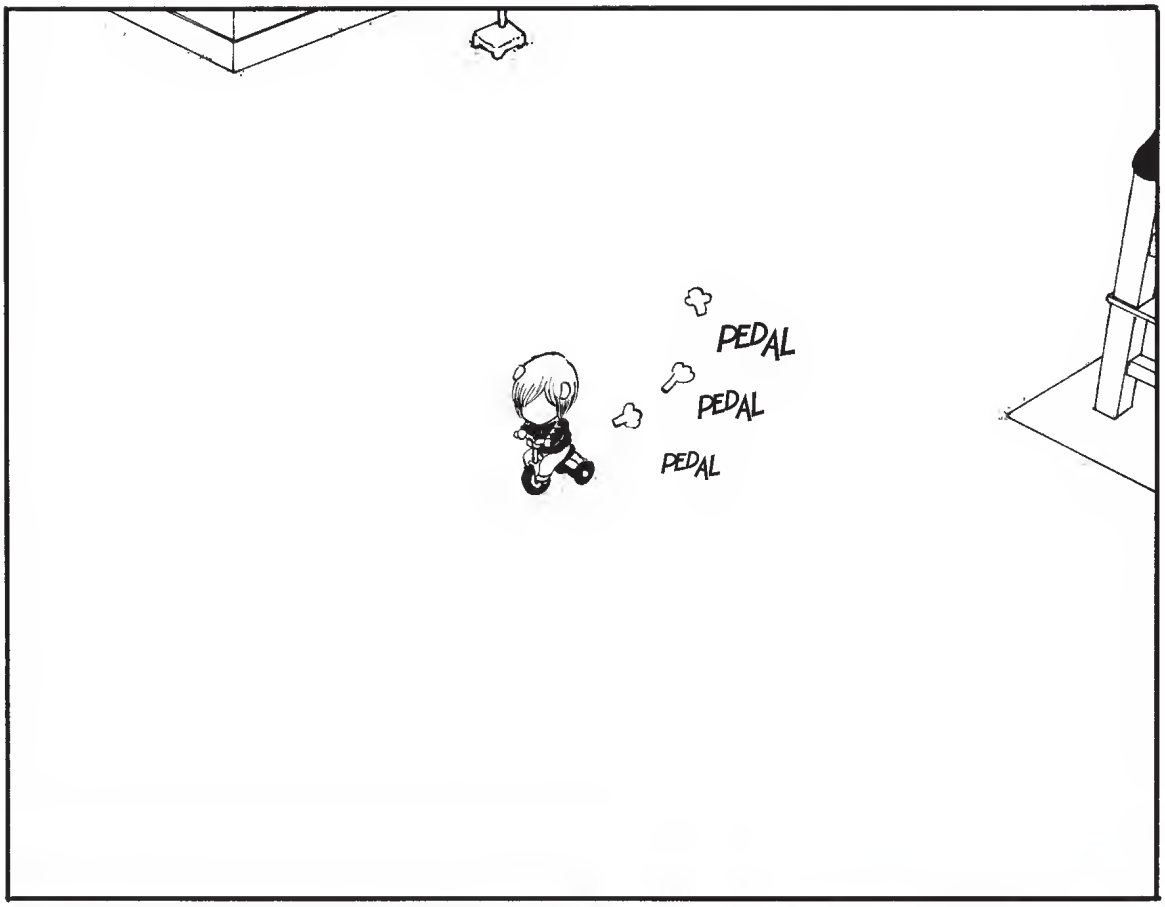

Good job!
You won against big sister. Amazing!
Now, now.
That wasn't a win...

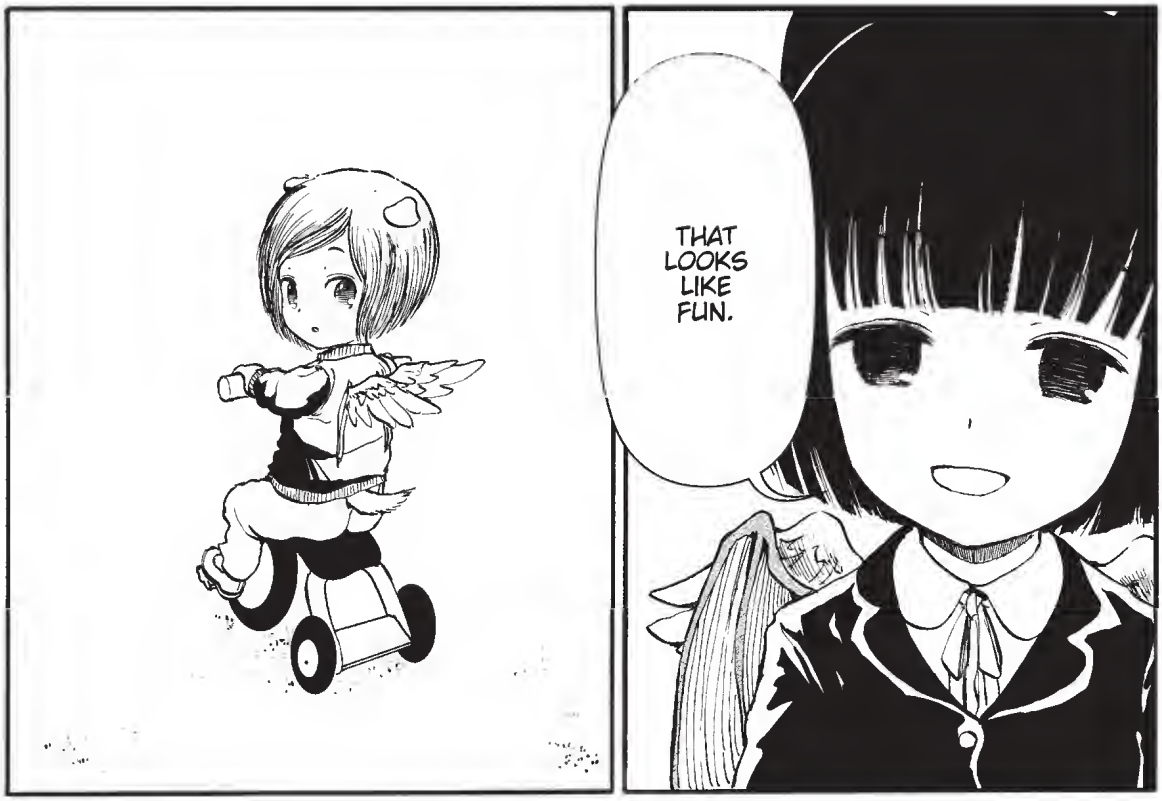

GRANDPA AND GRANDMA IN OSAKA WILL BUY YOU A BICYCLE WHEN SPRING ROLLS AROUND, RIGHT?

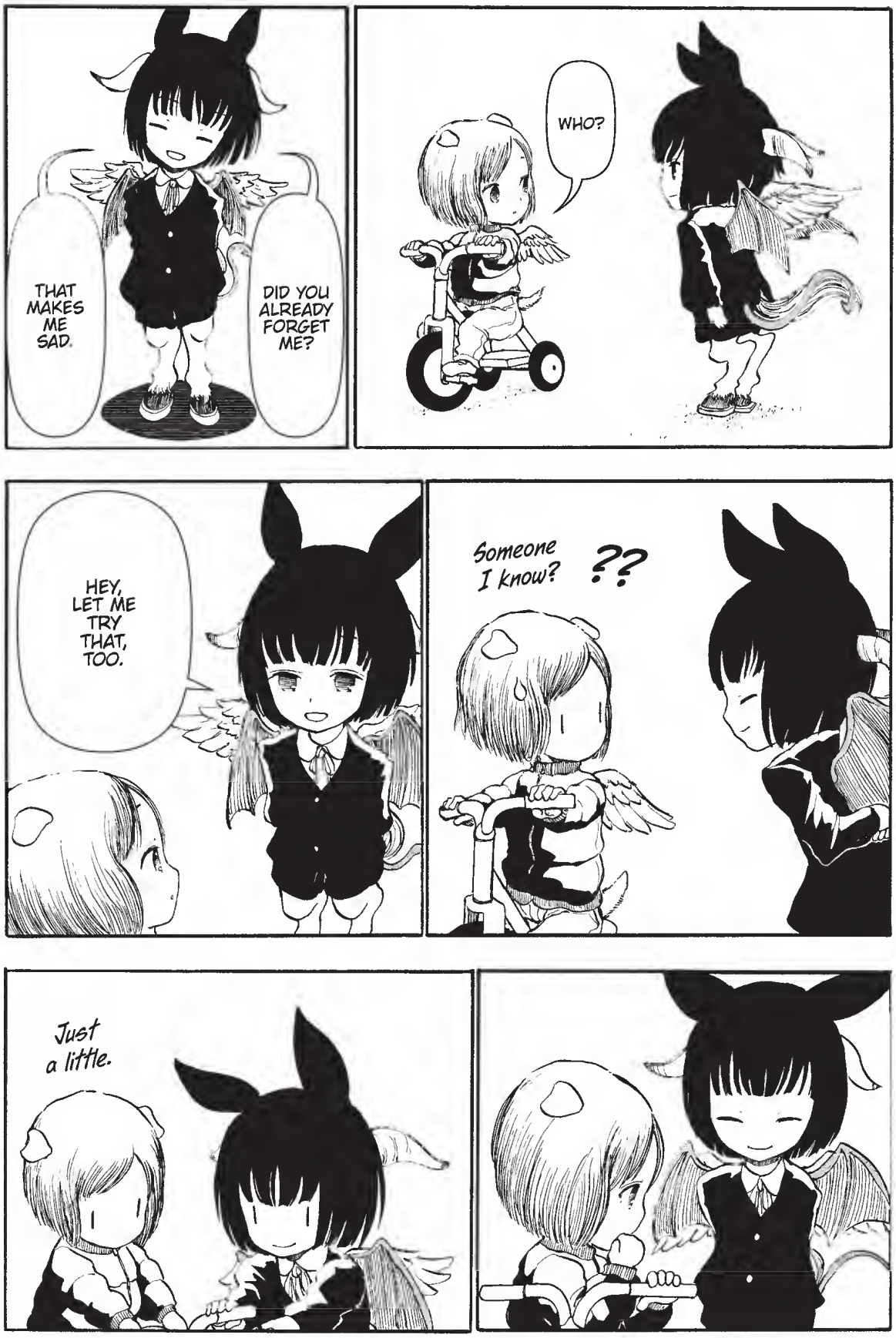
WE NEED A BICYCLE RIGHT AWAY!
CHI-CHANS' TRICYCLE IS ALREADY TOO SMALL.

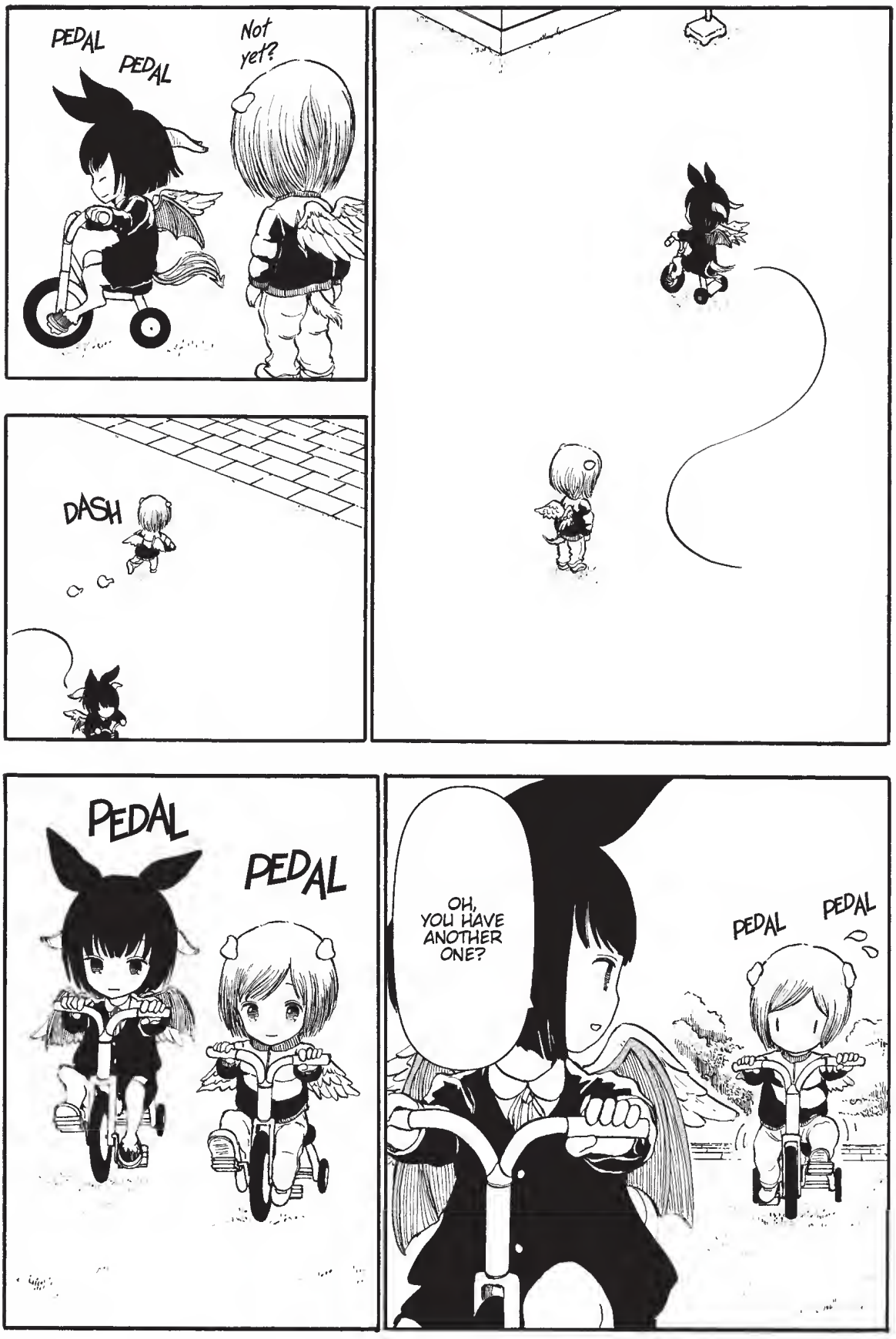

ABSO-LUTELY NOT!
LET'S RACE WITH BICYCLES NEXT.

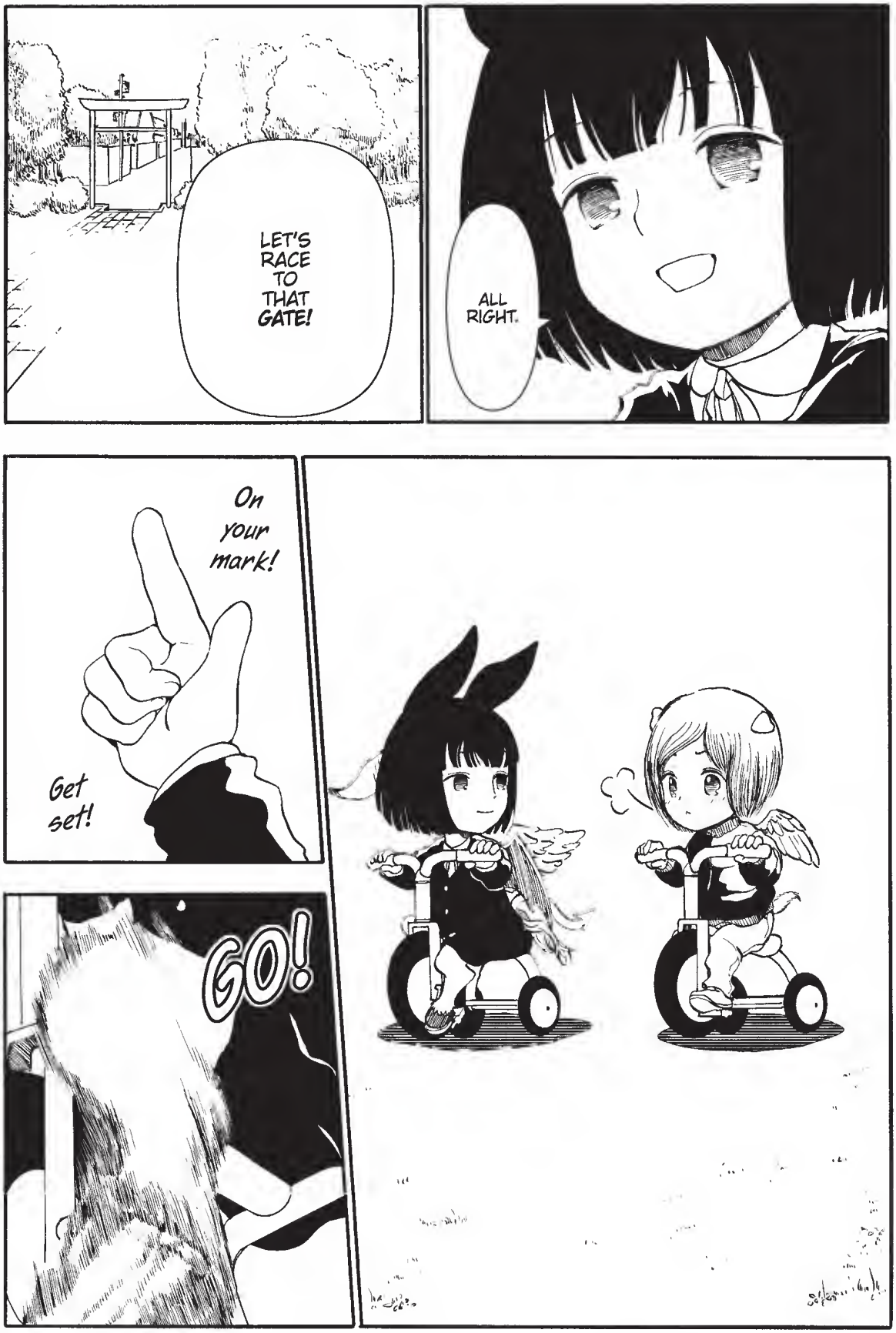
BIG SISTER WILL DIE.
WHAT HAPPENS IF IT GETS SHORT?
Boo! Boo!
EVERY TIME YOU GUYS DO SOMETHING DANGEROUS, MY LIFESPAN SHORTENS BY FIVE YEARS.
Mii!
THAT'S NOT FAIR~!
YUP, BECAUSE CHI BIG SISTERS ALWAYS DO BAD THINGS.
DIE...?
Chi-chans' Record
3 Found five hours later 20km away.
How?!
RIBBIT
2 Gone within one hour.
1 The first day they could walk...
What do you mean?
I'M TELLING YOU, YOU GUYS HAVE A RECORD AGAINST YOU!

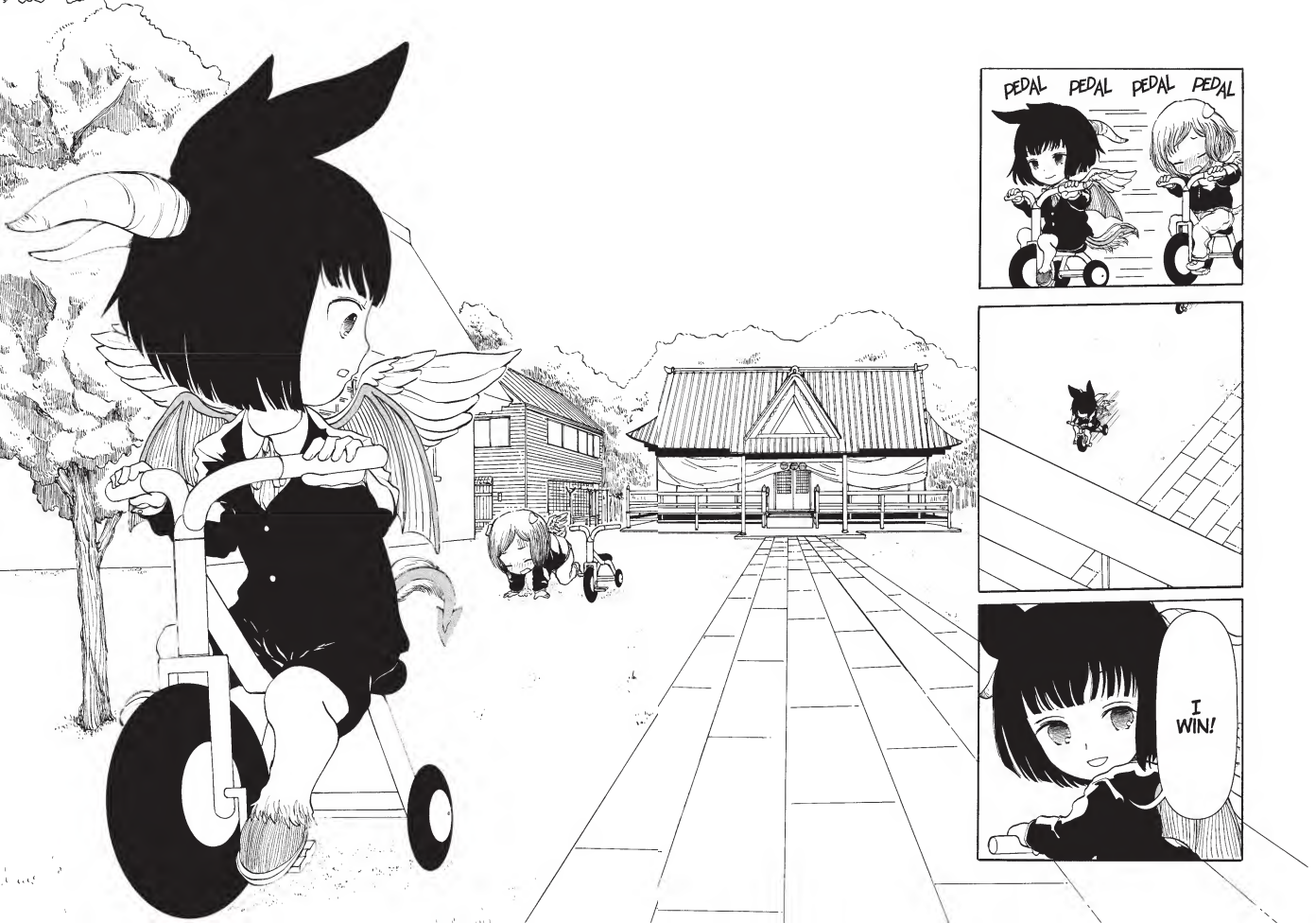

PEDAL
PEDAL
PEDAL

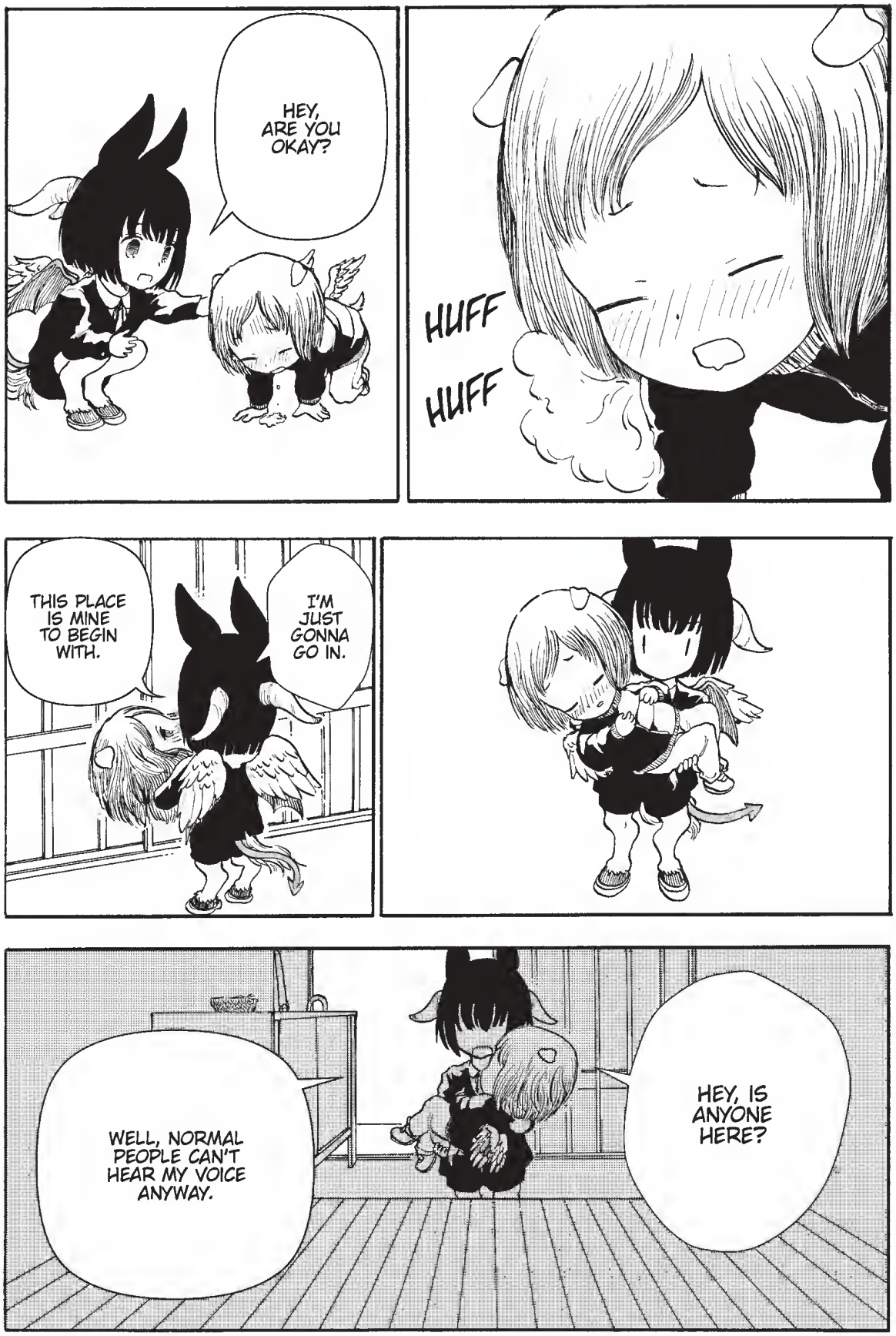

THAT LOOKS LIKE FUN.

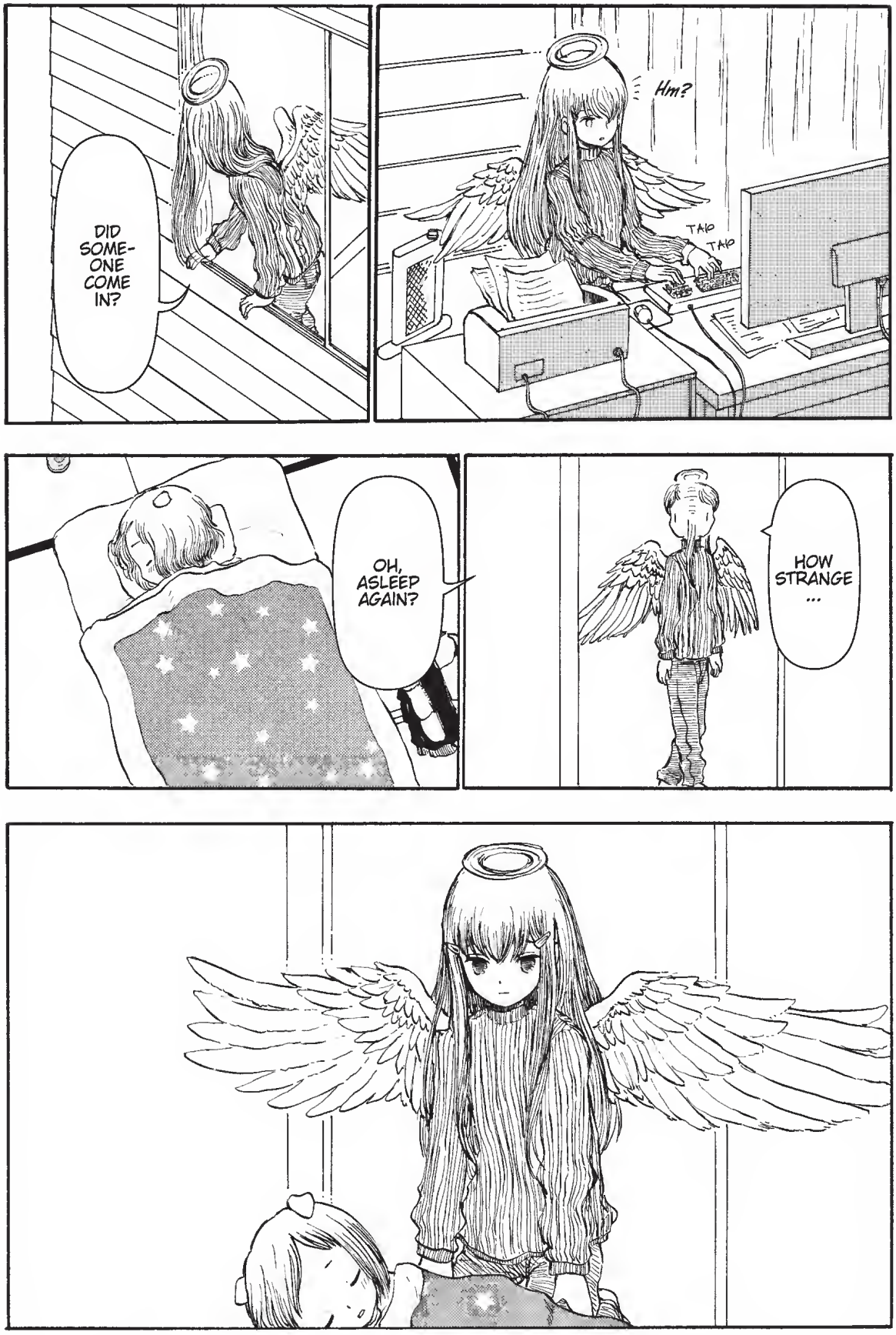

DID YOU ALREADY FORGET ME?
THAT MAKES ME SAD.
WHO?
HEY, LET ME TRY THAT, TOO.
Someone I know?
??
Just a little.

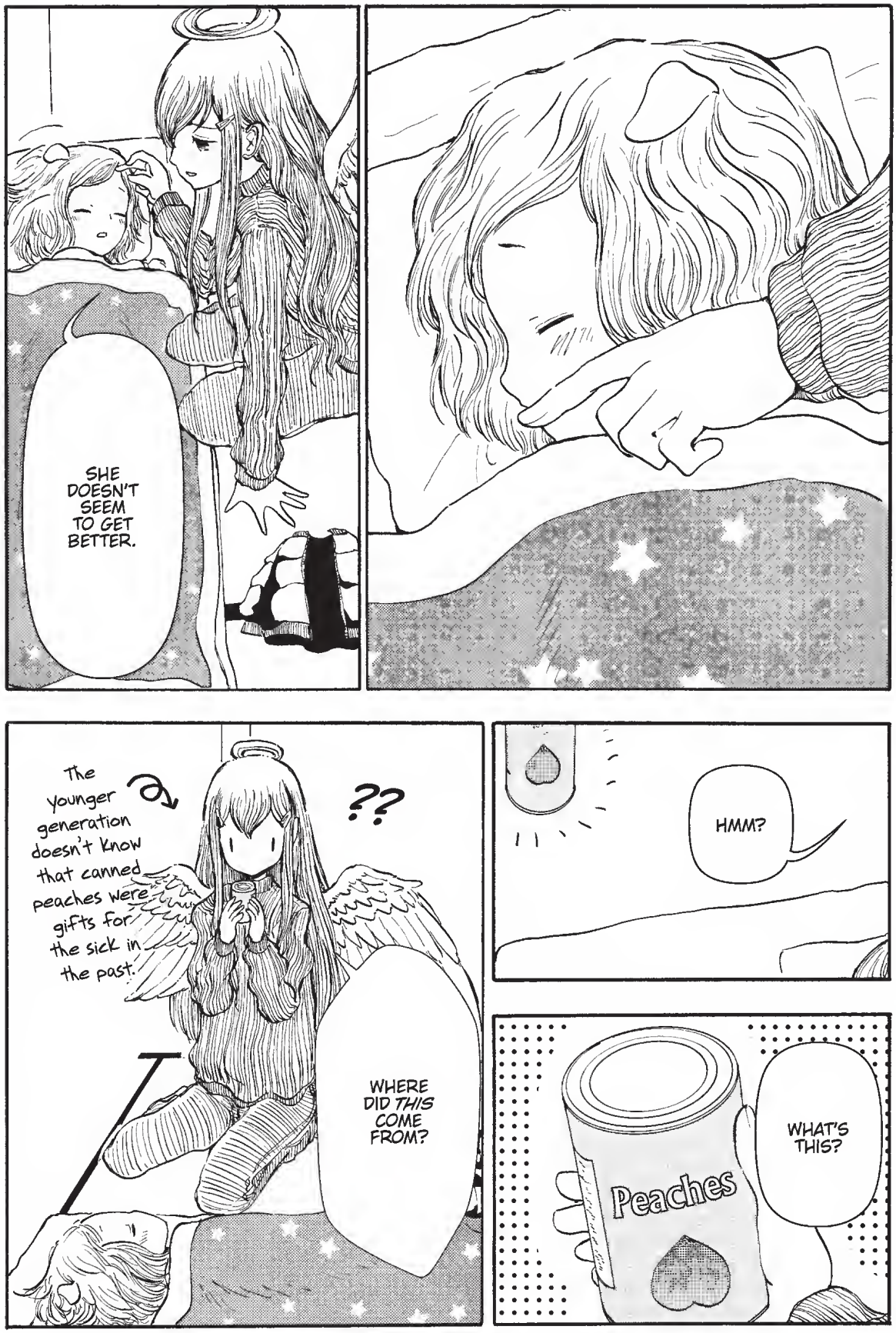

PEDAL
PEDAL
Not yet?
DASH
PEDAL
PEDAL
OH, YOU HAVE ANOTHER ONE?
PEDAL
PEDAL


LET'S RACE TO THAT GATE!
ALL RIGHT.
On your mark!
Get set!
GO!


PEDAL PEDAL PEDAL PEDAL
I WIN!


HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?
HUFF
HUFF
THIS PLACE IS MINE TO BEGIN WITH.
I'M JUST GONNA GO IN.
HEY, IS ANYONE HERE?
WELL, NORMAL PEOPLE CAN'T HEAR MY VOICE ANYWAY.


DID SOME-ONE COME IN?
Hm?
TAP TAP
OH, ASLEEP AGAIN?
HOW STRANGE ...


SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO GET BETTER.
The younger generation doesn't know that canned peaches were gifts for the sick in the past.
??
WHERE DID THIS COME FROM?
HMM?
Peaches
WHAT'S THIS?

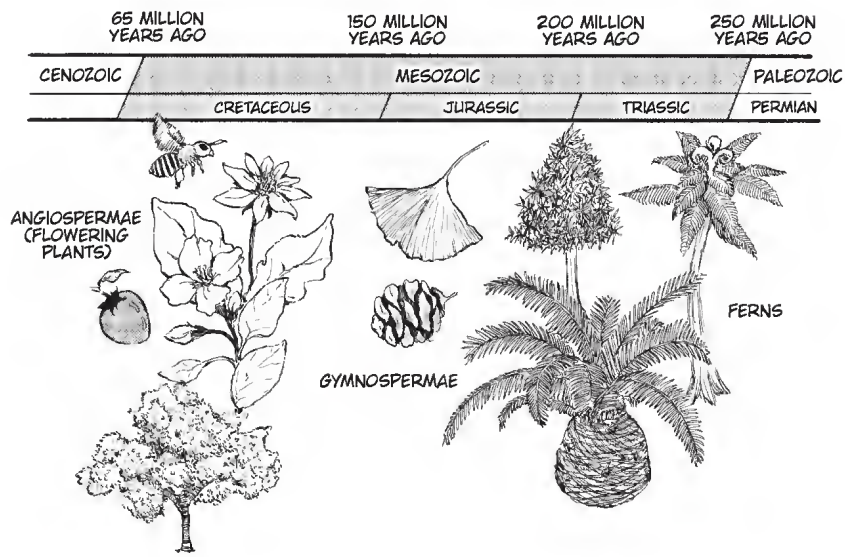
A CentaUr's Life

# MESOZOIC CREATURES

## DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: BACKDROP TO THE WORLD OF DINOSAURS

SO DISTRACTED ARE WE BY DINOSAURS THEMSELVES THAT WE RARELY TAKE THE TIME TO CONSIDER WHAT COMPRISED THEIR BACKDROP--THAT IS, THE PLANT LIFE OF THE MESOZOIC ERA. IT SEEMS THAT LOW-BUDGET FILMS TEND TO SIMPLY USE MODERN-DAY PLANTS, WHILE POPULAR LITERATURE OFTEN CONTAINS ILLUSTRATIONS OF FERNS.

IF THERE'S ONE TYPE OF FLORA REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MESOZOIC, HOWEVER, IT'S GYMNOSPERM. GYMNOSPERM PLANTS--RELATIVES OF MODERN CONIFERS (NEEDLE-LEAFED TREES) SUCH AS CYCAS, PINES, AND CEDARS, AS WELL AS GINGKO TREES--HAD ALREADY MADE THEIR ENTRANCE BY THE MESOZOIC'S CARBONIFEROUS PERIOD. FERNS, WHICH PROPAGATE THROUGH THE RELEASE OF THIRSTY SPORES, STRUGGLED TO PROLIFERATE. GYMNOSPERM SEEDS, HOWEVER, REQUIRE FAR LESS MOISTURE, AND THUS WERE ABLE TO GAIN A FIRM FOOTHOLD. BY THE TRIASSIC AND INTO THE JURASSIC, FERNS HAD BEEN CORDONED OFF TO THE DAMP RECESSES OF SWAMPLANDS, WHILE GYMNOSPERM FORESTS GREW FAR AND WIDE.



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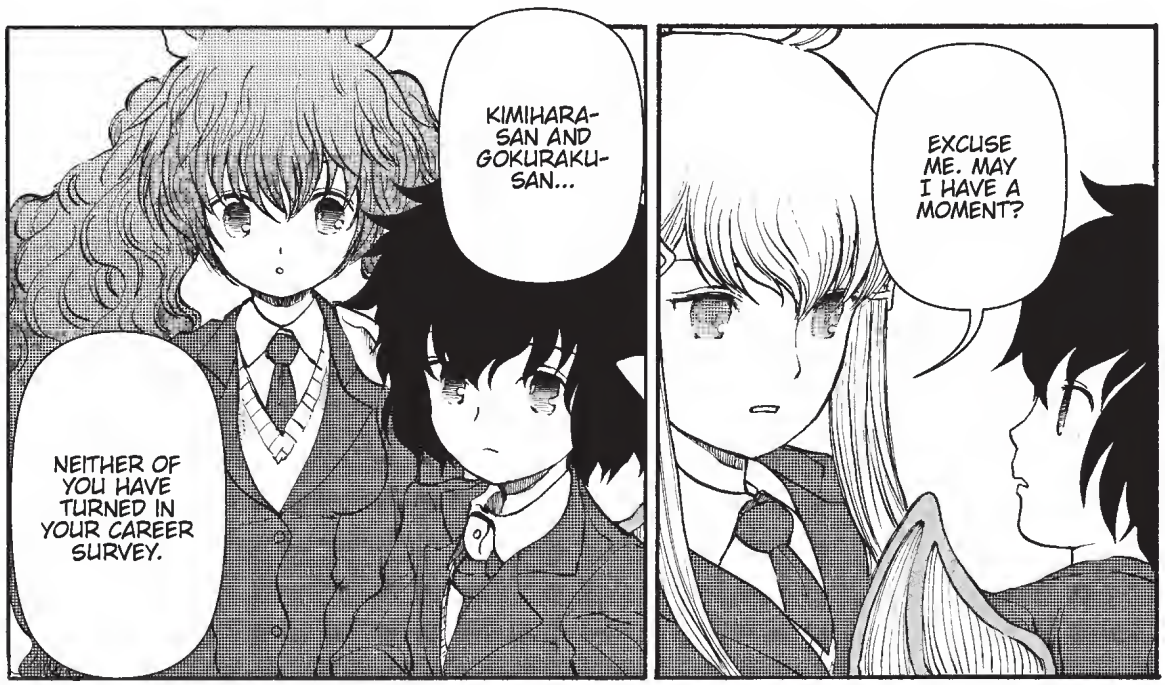
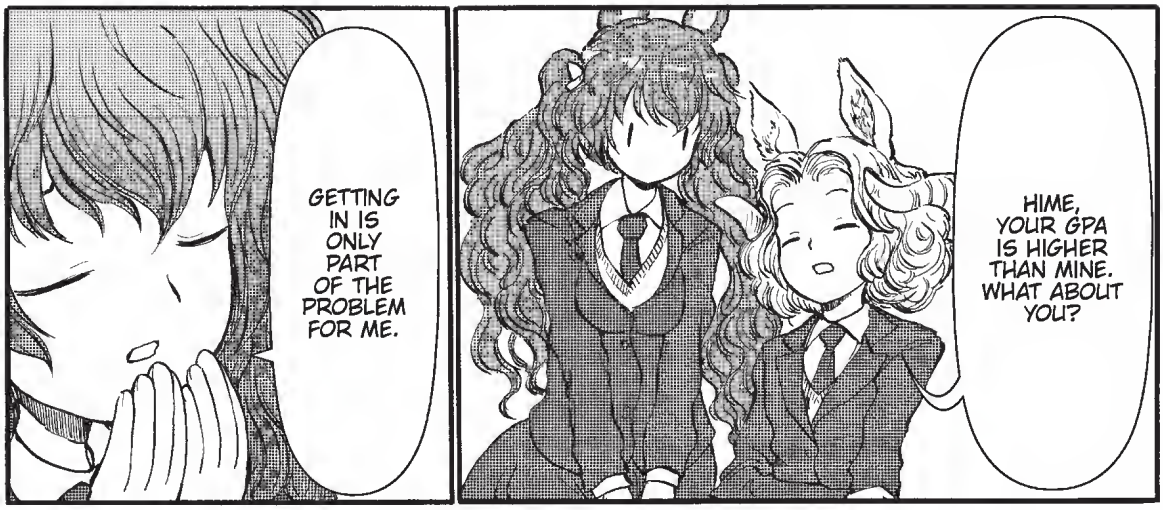
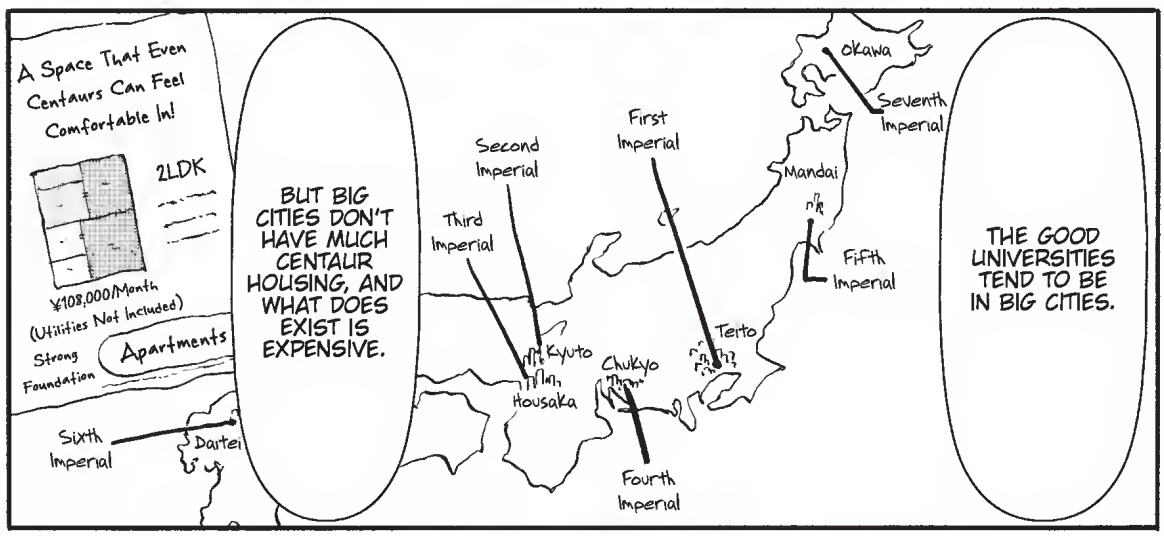
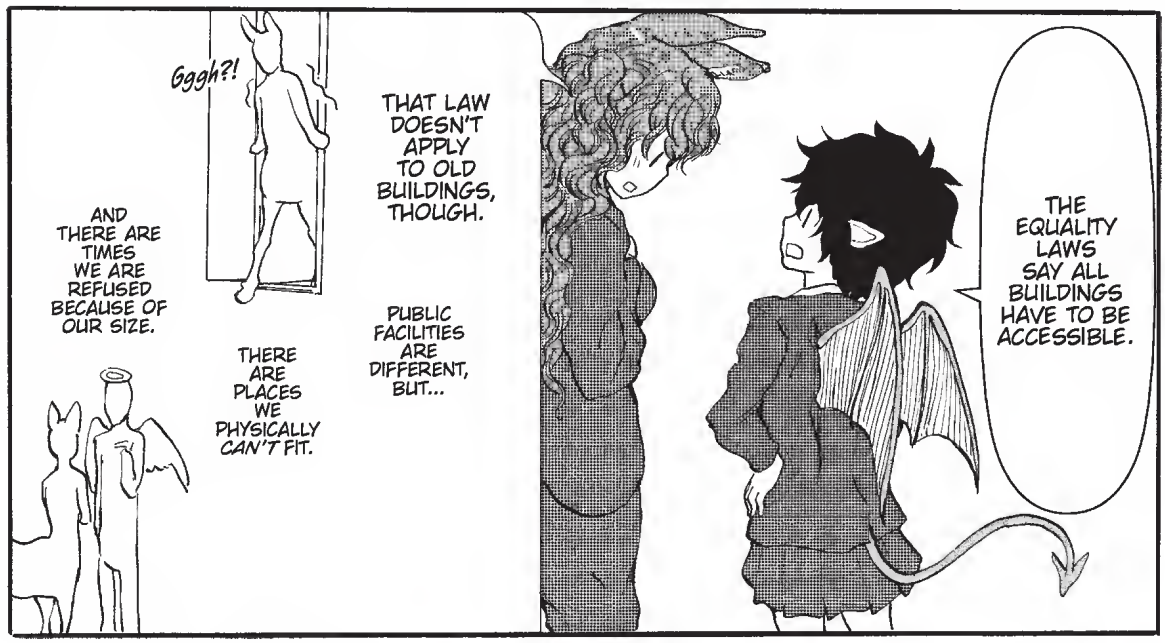

KIMIHARA-SAN AND GOKURAKU-SAN...
NEITHER OF YOU HAVE TURNED IN YOUR CAREER SURVEY.
EXCUSE ME. MAY I HAVE A MOMENT?

I'M GOING TO STUDY LAW AT FIRST IMPERIAL.
OH? WHAT'S THAT?
A LONG TIME AGO. I ALREADY KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO.
YOU ALREADY TURNED YOURS IN, KYOKO?
I DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE FOREVER. I WANT TO TEST MY SKILL AGAINST THE WORLD.
THAT'S AMAZING! ARE YOU CONFIDENT YOU'LL GET IN?
STUDYING ISN'T THE ONLY SKILL THERE IS, YA KNOW.
BUT GRADUATING FROM A GOOD SCHOOL DEFINITELY OPENS MORE DOORS FOR US.
NOT CONFIDENT, BUT I THINK IT'S POSSIBLE IF I WORK HARD.


GETTING IN IS ONLY PART OF THE PROBLEM FOR ME.
HIME, YOUR GPA IS HIGHER THAN MINE. WHAT ABOUT YOU?


A Space That Even Centaurs Can Feel Comfortable In!
2LDK
¥108,000/Month
(Utilities Not Included)
Strong Foundation
Apartments
BUT BIG CITIES DON'T HAVE MUCH CENTAUR HOUSING, AND WHAT DOES EXIST IS EXPENSIVE.
Okawa
Seventh Imperial
First Imperial
Second Imperial
Mandai
Third Imperial
Fifth Imperial
Kyuto
Housaka
Chukyo
Teito
Sixth Imperial
Fourth Imperial
THE GOOD UNIVERSITIES TEND TO BE IN BIG CITIES.

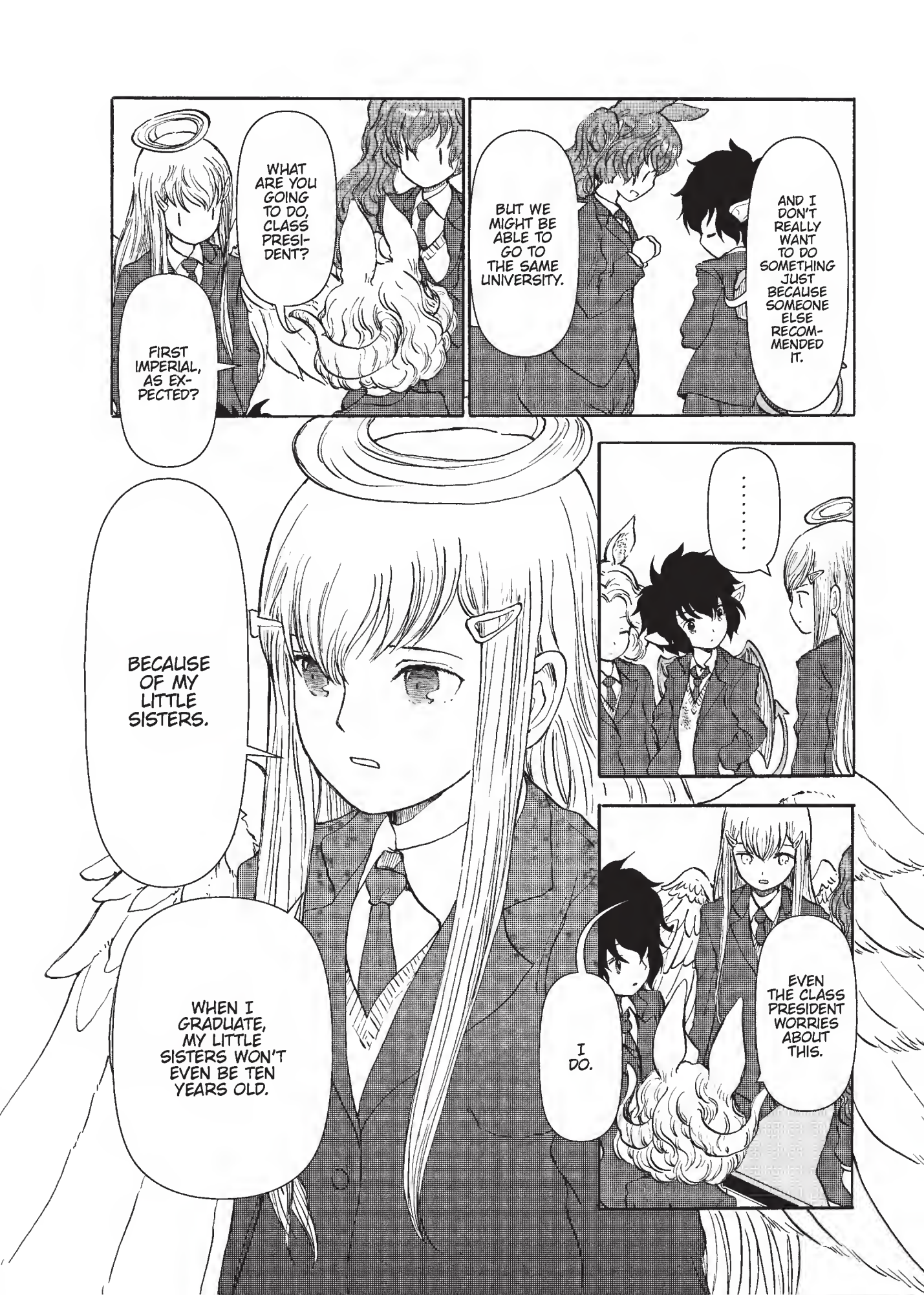

Gggh?!
AND THERE ARE TIMES WE ARE REFUSED BECAUSE OF OUR SIZE.
THERE ARE PLACES WE PHYSICALLY CAN'T FIT.
THAT LAW DOESN'T APPLY TO OLD BUILDINGS, THOUGH.
PUBLIC FACILITIES ARE DIFFERENT, BUT...
THE EQUALITY LAWS SAY ALL BUILDINGS HAVE TO BE ACCESSIBLE.

MY FATHER SAYS I SHOULD JUST GO TO KANA UNIVERSITY HERE.
BUT ACTUALLY, THE MAIN PROBLEM IS I HAVE NO CONFIDENCE OR MOTIVATION TO MOVE UPWARDS.
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT A JOB, WASN'T THAT OLD MAN FROM INTERNAL AFFAIRS TRYING TO RECRUIT YOU?
NO WAY! THAT WAS A CALL FOR SOLDIERS TO JOIN A FRONTLINE ARMY.
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAVE TO GO TO COLLEGE.
KANA UNIVERSITY IS AN IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY, SO IT'S NOT A BAD CHOICE.
IT'S HARD TO GET A JOB AFTER GRADUATING FROM A NEWLY ESTABLISHED SCHOOL, THOUGH.

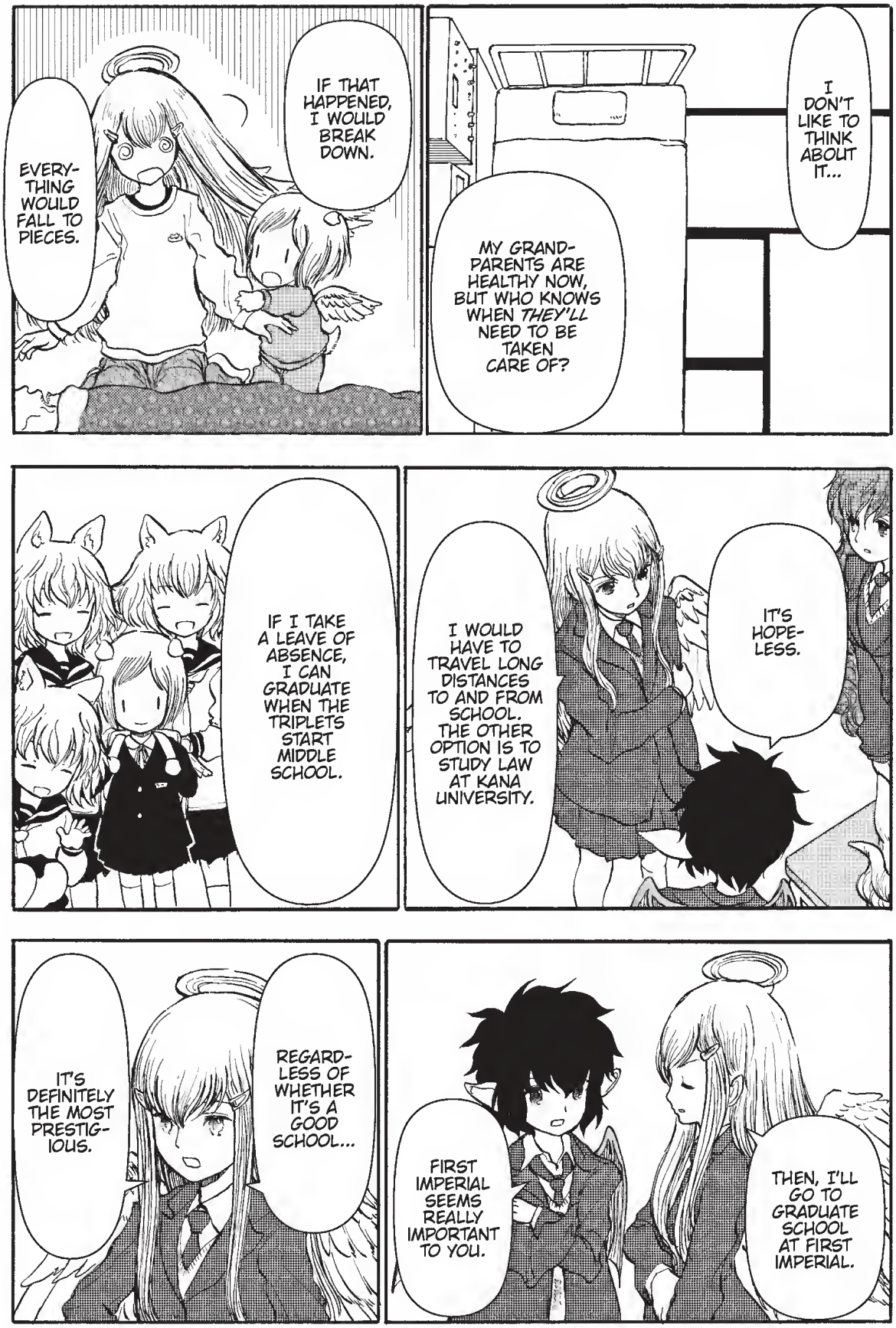
Internal Affairs Special Task Force
INTERNAL AFFAIRS
EXEMPLARY CITIZEN ENCOURAGEMENT STICK
FOR PEACE
HIME, DON'T GET SUCKERED IN. THOSE KINDS OF JOBS ARE ONLY COOL IN BOOKS AND MOVIES.
DON'T WORRY.
Nnngh!
THERE'S NO WAY I'D BE ABLE TO DO A JOB LIKE THAT.
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO DO THAT, TAKE THE HIGHER CIVIL SERVICE EXAM.
LIKE I SAID, IT'S NOT FOR ME.
Well, being a regular civil servant would be kind of nice.
THERE'S A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.

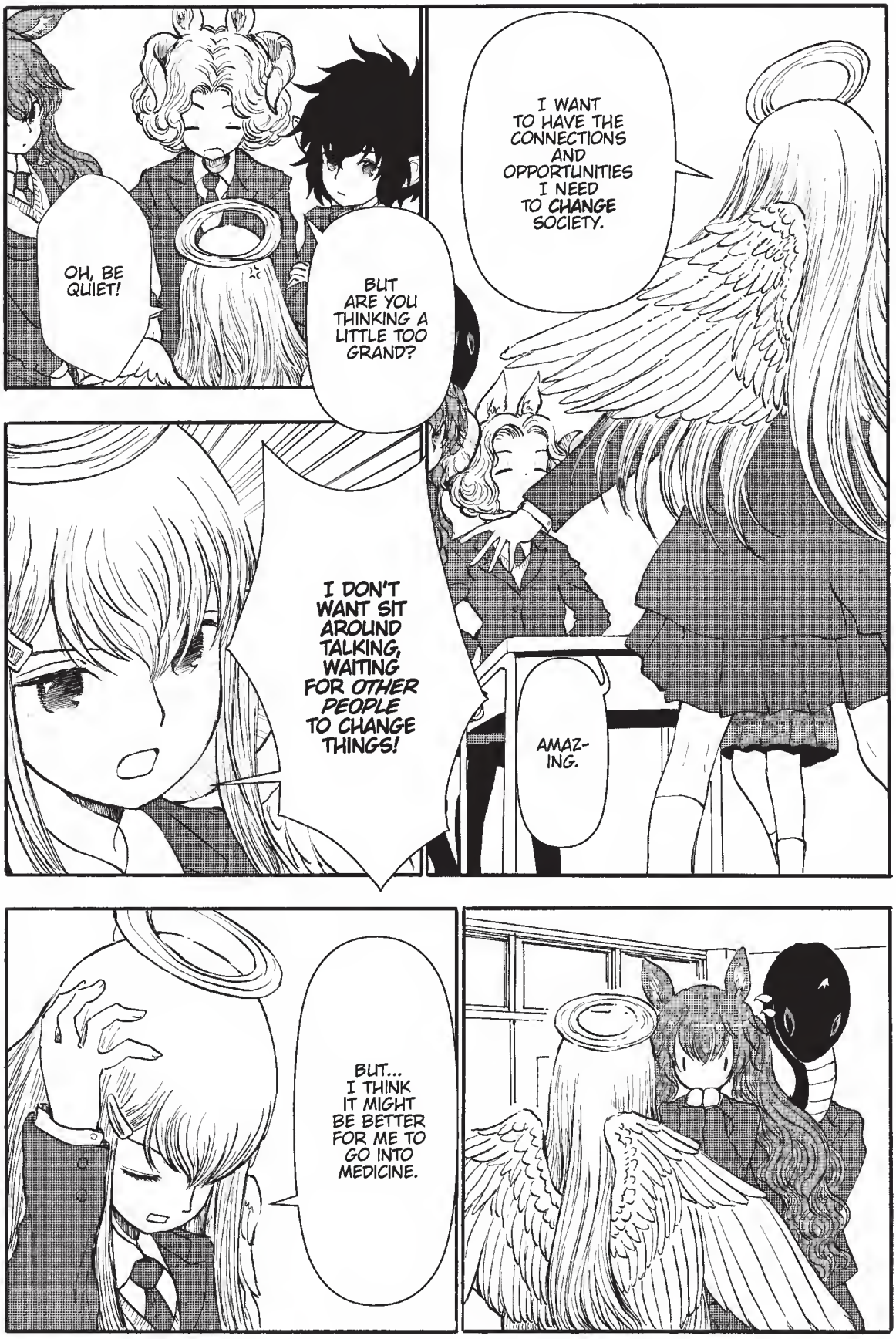
A LOT OF OUR STUDENTS ARE LITTLE KIDS.
Nozomi-Sensei, hurry!
THE PROBLEM IS *WHERE* I WANT TO GO.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, NOZOMI-CHAN? YOU'LL GO TO COLLEGE EVEN IF YOU TAKE OVER THE DOJO, RIGHT?
OSU!
BUT ALL THE OTHER TEACHERS LOOK SO **SCARY.**
THEY'RE NOT REALLY GOOD WITH KIDS.
SO IF I MOVE AWAY... WELL, YOU GET THE IDEA.

You guys are all lazy bums!
AND HE ONLY LOOKS LIKE A NICE GUY.
WHAT ABOUT THAT GUY FROM BEFORE?
SHIGETOKI-SAN? HE ALREADY HAS A JOB.
THAT SOUNDS NICE. IT'S A GOOD WAY TO SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS AND BUILD YOU UP AS A TEACHER.
PHYS ED?
WHY DON'T YOU STUDY PHYS ED AT KANA UNIVERSITY?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW.
And I don't really want to stay in my hometown forever.
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO TAKE OVER THE DOJO.

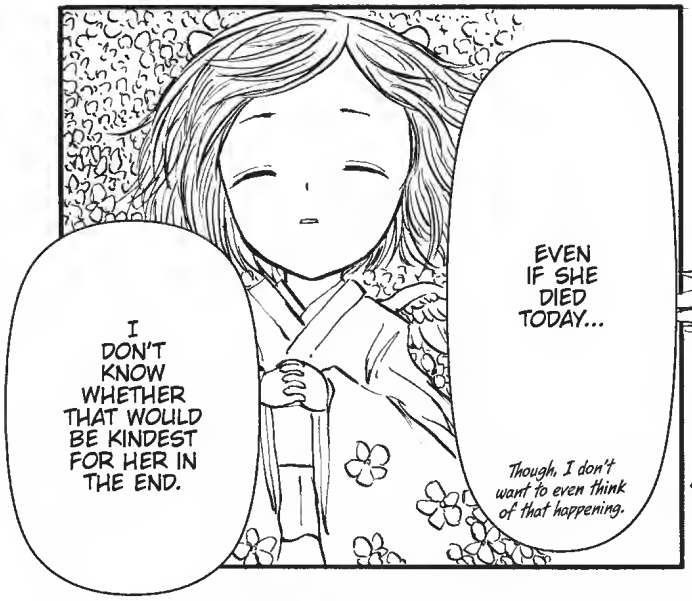

AND I DON'T REALLY WANT TO DO SOMETHING JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE RECOMMENDED IT.
BUT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GO TO THE SAME UNIVERSITY.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, CLASS PRESIDENT?
FIRST IMPERIAL, AS EXPECTED?
.....
EVEN THE CLASS PRESIDENT WORRIES ABOUT THIS.
I DO.
BECAUSE OF MY LITTLE SISTERS.
WHEN I GRADUATE, MY LITTLE SISTERS WON'T EVEN BE TEN YEARS OLD.

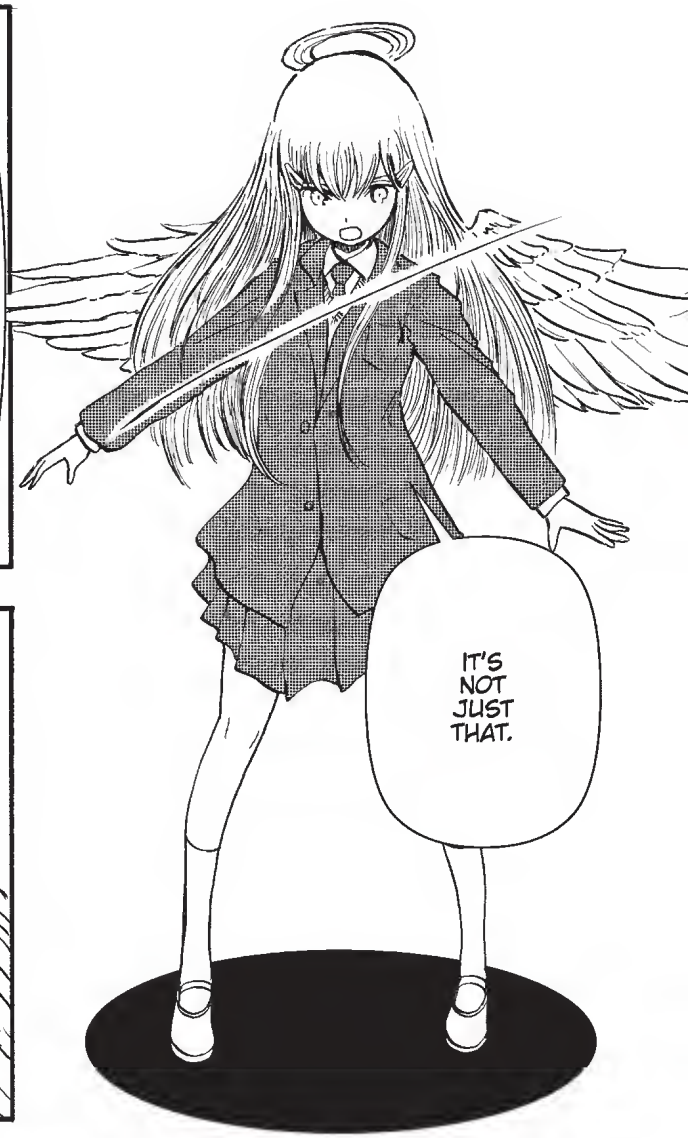
GET OFF OF THAT!
THEY'RE NOT OLD ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF THEM-SELVES.
MY FATHER CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THEM ON HIS OWN.
And who would look after my father?
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT DEPENDING ON MY FATHER'S PARENTS...
MNCH
MNCH
AND THERE'S A RISK THEY'D GET TOO SPOILED.
BUT NO MATTER HOW CUTE THEIR GRAND-CHILDREN ARE, IT'S DIFFICULT TO TAKE CARE OF THEM.
1
2


I DON'T LIKE TO THINK ABOUT IT...
MY GRAND-PARENTS ARE HEALTHY NOW, BUT WHO KNOWS WHEN *THEY'LL* NEED TO BE TAKEN CARE OF?
IF THAT HAPPENED, I WOULD BREAK DOWN.
EVERY-THING WOULD FALL TO PIECES.
IT'S HOPE-LESS.
I WOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES TO AND FROM SCHOOL. THE OTHER OPTION IS TO STUDY LAW AT KANA UNIVERSITY.
IF I TAKE A LEAVE OF ABSENCE, I CAN GRADUATE WHEN THE TRIPLETS START MIDDLE SCHOOL.
THEN, I'LL GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL AT FIRST IMPERIAL.
FIRST IMPERIAL SEEMS REALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU.
REGARD-LESS OF WHETHER IT'S A GOOD SCHOOL...
IT'S DEFINITELY THE MOST PRESTIG-IOUS.

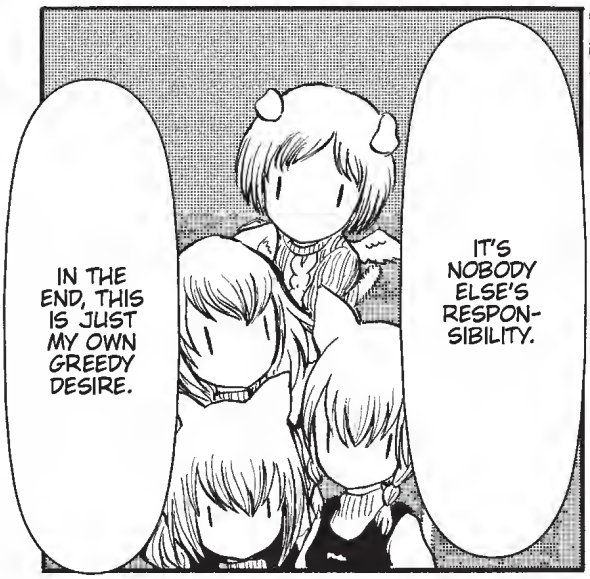

I WANT TO HAVE THE CONNECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES I NEED TO CHANGE SOCIETY.
AMAZ-ING.
BUT ARE YOU THINKING A LITTLE TOO GRAND?
OH, BE QUIET!
I DON'T WANT SIT AROUND TALKING, WAITING FOR OTHER PEOPLE TO CHANGE THINGS!
BUT... I THINK IT MIGHT BE BETTER FOR ME TO GO INTO MEDICINE.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I DON'T KNOW.
I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER.
BUT SHE'S NOT HEALTHY, EITHER.
NOT EXACTLY.
IS SUE-CHAN THAT SICK?
YOU REALLY CARE FOR YOUR LITTLE SISTER.
SO AT THE VERY LEAST, I WANT TO BE IN A POSITION TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION.

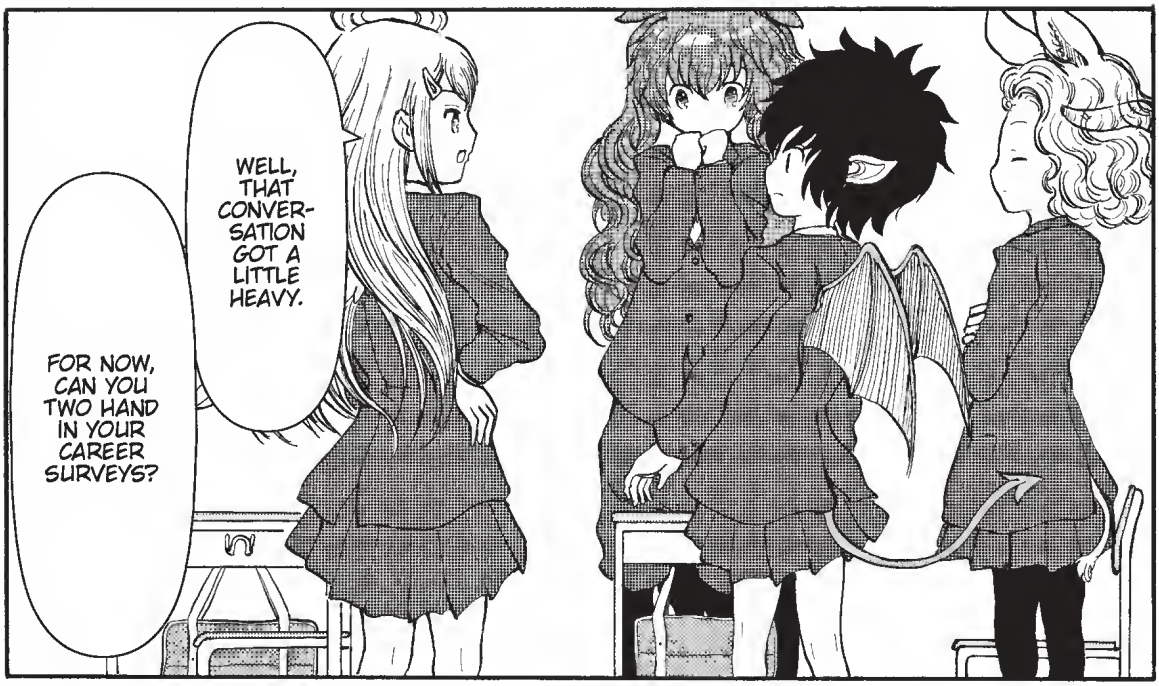

EVEN IF SHE DIED TODAY...
Though, I don't want to even think of that happening.
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THAT WOULD BE KINDEST FOR HER IN THE END.

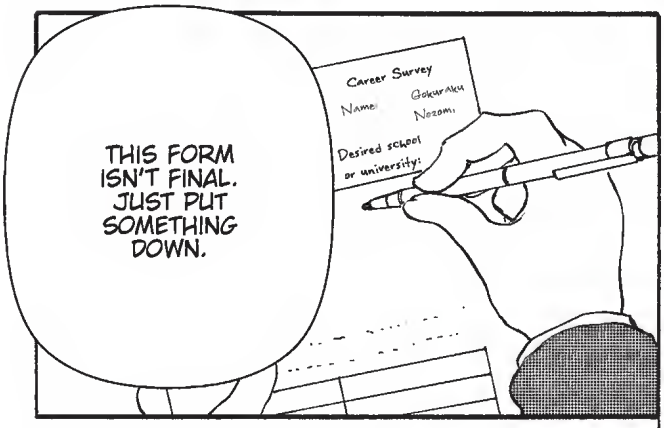

IT'S NOT JUST THAT.

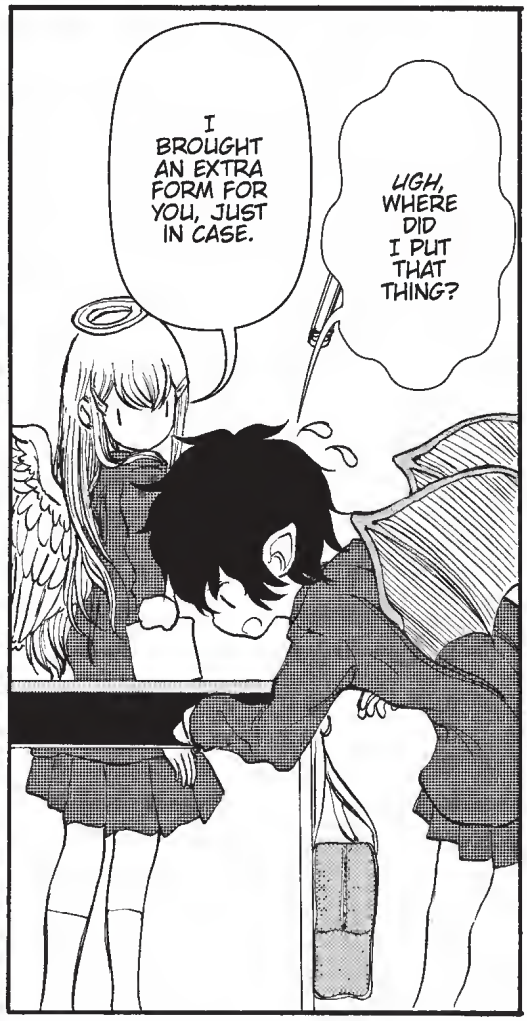
BUT IT WOULD BE HARD FOR ME.
VERY, VERY HARD.


IT'S NOBODY ELSE'S RESPON-SIBILITY.
IN THE END, THIS IS JUST MY OWN GREEDY DESIRE.

EVEN IF IT'S PURELY SELFISH.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO DO ANYTHING I CAN FOR MY LITTLE SISTERS.

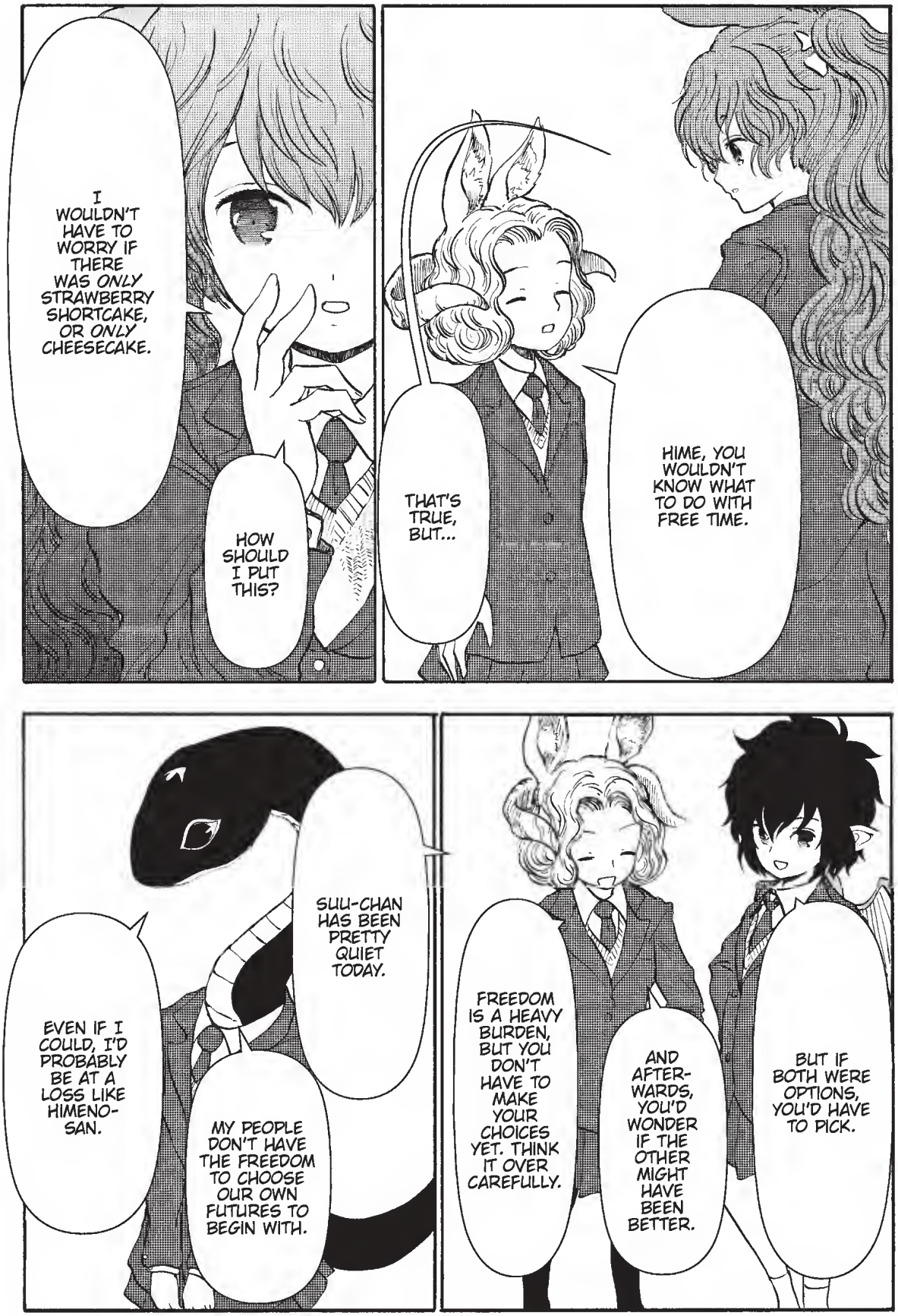

WELL, THAT CONVER-SATION GOT A LITTLE HEAVY.
FOR NOW, CAN YOU TWO HAND IN YOUR CAREER SURVEYS?


Career Survey
Name: Gokurakuin Nozomi
Desired school or university:
THIS FORM ISN'T FINAL. JUST PUT SOMETHING DOWN.


I BROUGHT AN EXTRA FORM FOR YOU, JUST IN CASE.
UGH, WHERE DID I PUT THAT THING?

HERE.
THANKS.

SHE'S AMAZING.
SHE'S SO MUCH MORE MATURE THAN US.
I'M ACTUALLY A LITTLE JEALOUS.
SHE HAS A REAL GOAL IN MIND.
OTHERS WOULD HAVE BEEN CRUSHED BY THE PRESSURE.
IT'S NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS.
I KNOW THAT, BUT...


I WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY IF THERE WAS *ONLY* STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE, OR *ONLY* CHEESECAKE.
HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS?
THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
HIME, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH FREE TIME.
SUU-CHAN HAS BEEN PRETTY QUIET TODAY.
EVEN IF I COULD, I'D PROBABLY BE AT A LOSS LIKE HIMENO-SAN.
MY PEOPLE DON'T HAVE THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE OUR OWN FUTURES TO BEGIN WITH.
FREEDOM IS A HEAVY BURDEN, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE YOUR CHOICES YET. THINK IT OVER CAREFULLY.
AND AFTER-WARDS, YOU'D WONDER IF THE OTHER MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER.
BUT IF BOTH WERE OPTIONS, YOU'D HAVE TO PICK.

A CentaUr's Life

# MESOZOIC CREATURES

## DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: NON-DINOSAUR REPTILES OF THE MESOZOIC

OFTEN EXHIBITED ALONGSIDE AND MISTAKEN FOR DINOSAURS ARE PTEROSAURS, PLESIOSAURS, AND ICHTHYOSAURS. OF THE THREE, PTEROSAURS ARE PARTICULARLY CLOSE RELATIVES TO DINOSAURS, WITH WHOM THEY SHARE A COMMON ANCESTOR IN THE LAGOSUCHUS CREATURES OF THE TRIASSIC PERIOD. PLESIOSAURS, MEANWHILE, ARE CLOSER RELATED TO THE LIKES OF SCALY LIZARDS AND SNAKES (LEPISOSAUROMORPHS) THAN THEY ARE TO DINOSAURS (OR "ARCHOSAURS," WHICH ALSO INCLUDE CROCODILES AND TURTLES). ICHTHYOSAURS, THOUGH ALSO DIAPSIDS, ARE ONLY DISTANTLY RELATED TO BOTH LIZARDS AND DINOSAURS, HAVING BRANCHED OFF EARLIER THAN EITHER OF THE ABOVE.

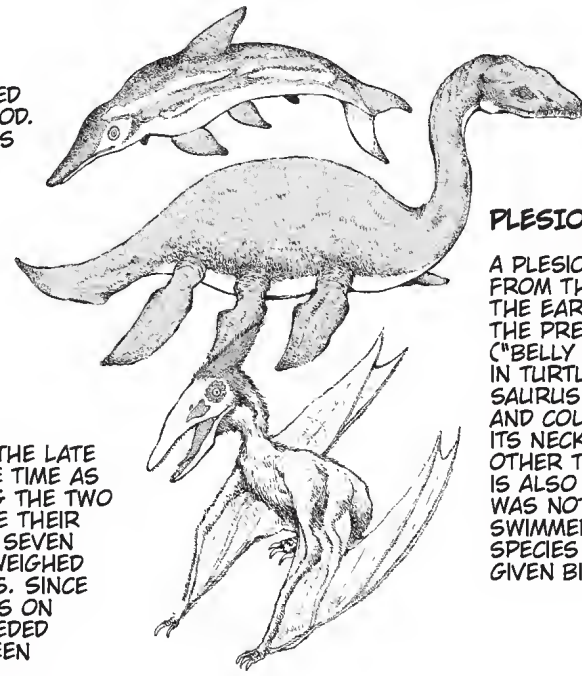
PTEROSAURS, SUCH AS THE WELL-KNOWN PTERANODON, WERE CREATURES CAPABLE OF POWERED FLIGHT, AND THEY DOMINATED THE SKIES DURING THE MESOZOIC AGE. HOWEVER, BY THE END OF THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD, JUST AS BIRD SPECIES WERE ALSO COMING TO MASTER POWERED FLIGHT, VIRTUALLY ALL PTEROSAURS HAD GROWN LARGE IN SIZE, AND THEY WERE ALMOST COMPLETELY WIPED OUT ALONGSIDE THE DINOSAURS.

PLESIOSAURS WERE WATER-DWELLING REPTILES, INCLUDING THE PLESIOSAURUS AND FUTABASAURUS. PLESIOSAURS WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO MAIN GROUPS--PLESIOSAUROIDEA, WHICH HAD LONG NECKS AND SMALL HEADS; AND PLIOSAUROIDEA, WHICH CONVERSELY HAD SHORT NECKS AND LARGE HEADS. BOTH HAD SIX FLIPPERS AND WERE PERFECTLY ADAPTED FOR THE LIFE AQUATIC. THE PLESIOSAURS WERE NDEED WIPED OUT ALONGSIDE THE DINOSAURS.

ICHTHYOSAURS WERE AQUATIC REPTILES EVEN FURTHER ADAPTED FOR AQUATIC LIFE AND HIGHLY SIMILAR IN FORM TO DOLPHINS. THEY ALSO RESEMBLED DOLPHINS IN THAT THEY BORE LIVE YOUNG AND GAVE BIRTH UNDERWATER. HOWEVER, UNLIKE DOLPHINS, WHO UNDULATE UP AND DOWN TO PROPEL THEMSELVES, ICHTHYOSAURS MOVED LEFT AND RIGHT JUST LIKE FISH. THOUGH THEY THRIVED DURING THE JURASSIC PERIOD, THE ICHTHYOSAURS LOST THEIR POSITION AT THE TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN TO PLESIOSAURS IN THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD, AND WENT EXTINCT EVEN BEFORE DINOSAURS.

### ICHTHYOSAURUS

AN ICHTHYOSAUR WHICH LIVED DURING THE JURASSIC PERIOD. APPROXIMATELY TWO METERS IN LENGTH.



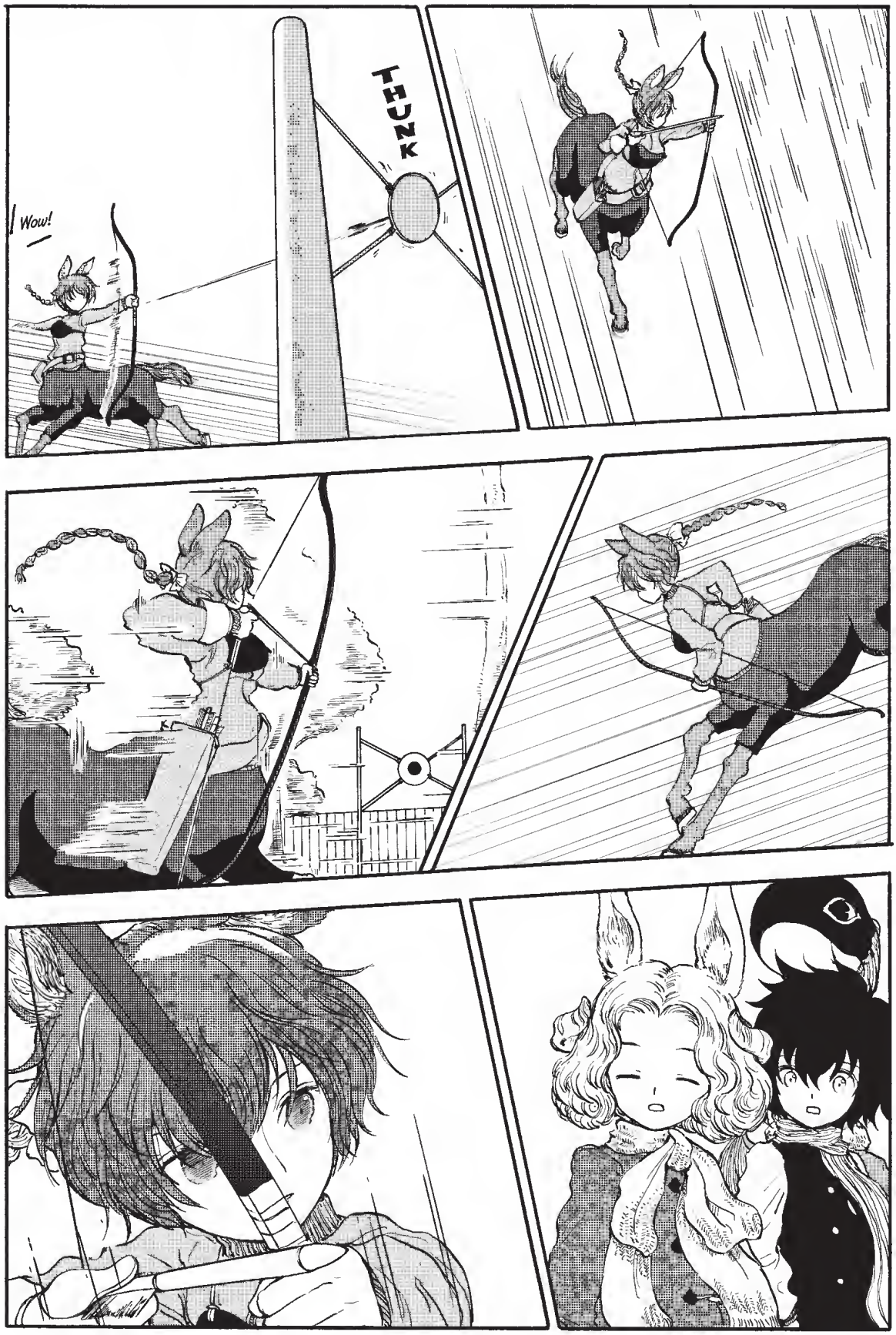
### PLESIOSAURUS

A PLESIOSAUR WHICH LIVED FROM THE LATE TRIASSIC TO THE EARLY JURASSIC. DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF *GASTRALIA* ("BELLY RIBS," ALSO FOUND IN TURTLES), THE PLESIOSAURUS LACKED FLEXIBILITY, AND COULD SCARCELY BEND ITS NECK IN ANY DIRECTION OTHER THAN DOWNWARD. IT IS ALSO BELIEVED THAT IT WAS NOT A VERY NIMBLE SWIMMER. THIS PARTICULAR SPECIES IS KNOWN TO HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO LIVE YOUNG.

### PTERANODON

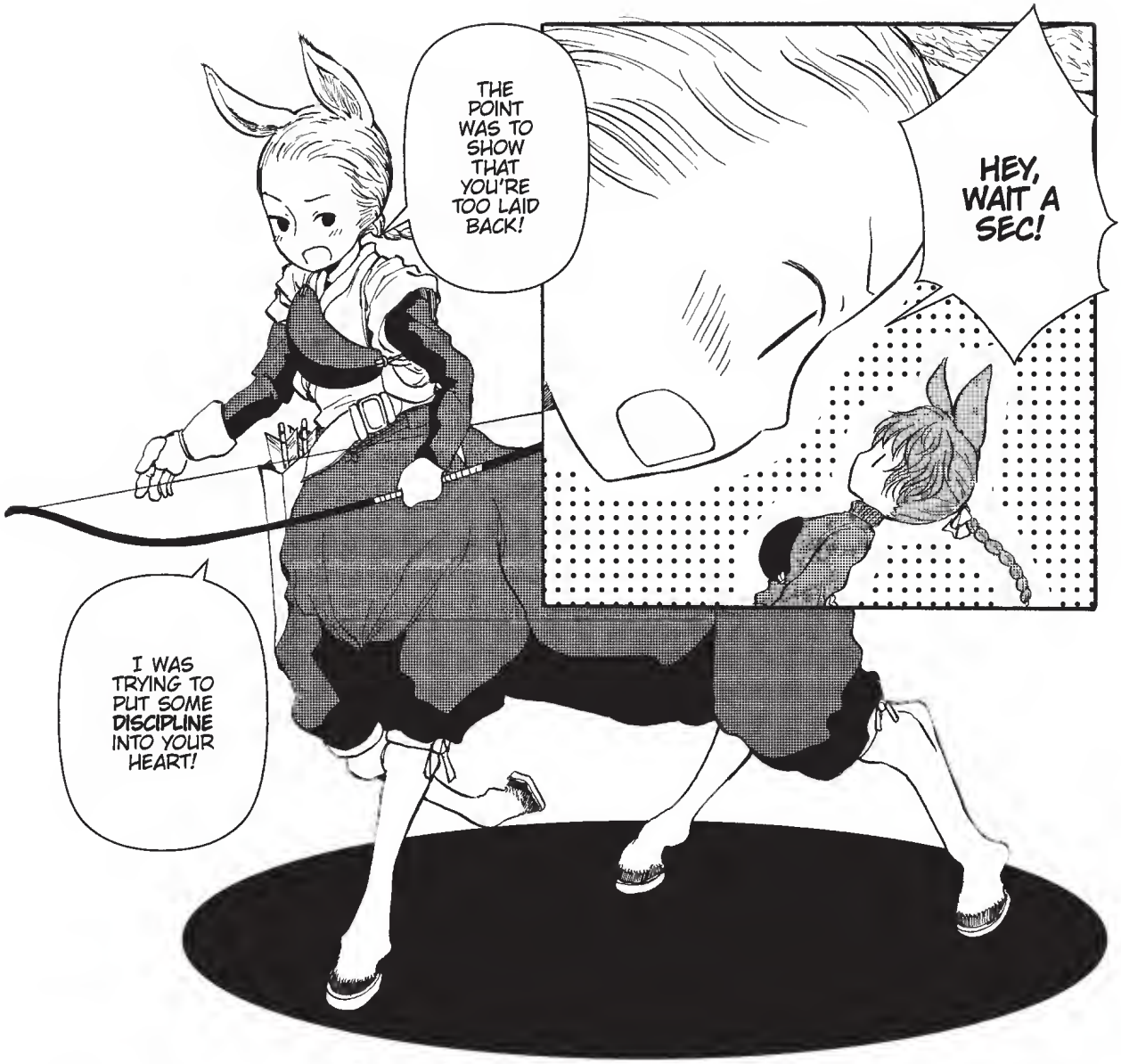
A PTEROSAUR WHICH LIVED DURING THE LATE CRETACEOUS (BUT NOT AT THE SAME TIME AS TYRANNOSAURUS; SCENES DEPICTING THE TWO TOGETHER ARE NONSENSICAL). WHILE THEIR WINGSPANS COULD REACH BETWEEN SEVEN AND NINE METERS, THEY TYPICALLY WEIGHED ONLY FIFTEEN TO TWENTY KILOGRAMS. SINCE THERE WERE RELATIVELY FEW PLACES ON THEIR BODY WHERE THE MUSCLE NEEDED FOR WING-FLAPPING COULD HAVE BEEN ATTACHED, IT IS THOUGHT THAT THEY MOSTLY RELIED ON GLIDING.

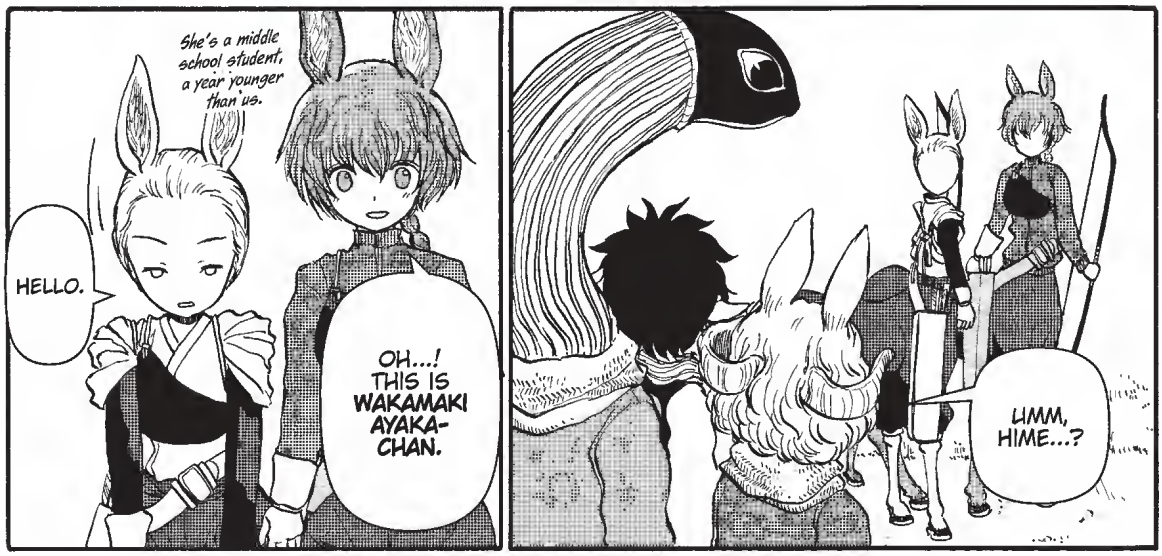
RUMMMBLE
CHAPTER 28


THUNK
Wow!

Oh!
WOBBLE
SHWIP
YOU'RE GETTING LAZY, SENPAI!
Ee-hee!
What was that?!

THUNK
SHWINK
EEP!
Heh!
DON'T POINT ARROWS TOWARD PEOPLE! THAT'S DANGER-OUS!
FLAIL
FLAIL
UH, I-I'M SORRY...

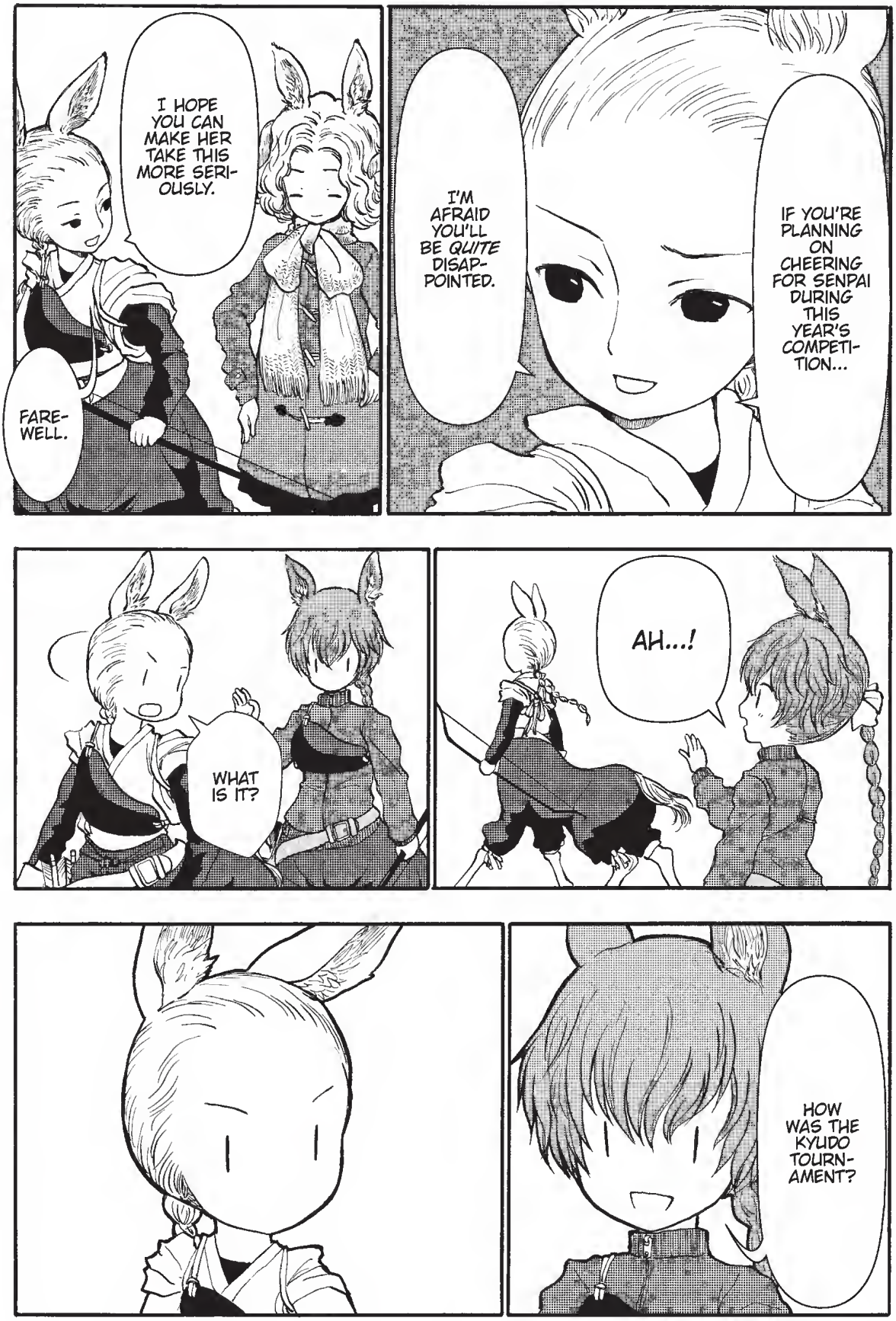

HEY, WAIT A SEC!
THE POINT WAS TO SHOW THAT YOU'RE TOO LAID BACK!
I WAS TRYING TO PUT SOME DISCIPLINE INTO YOUR HEART!


She's a middle school student, a year younger than us.
HELLO.
OH...! THIS IS WAKAMAKI AYAKA-CHAN.
UMM, HIME...?

*Mounted archery.
**The Japanese martial art of archery.

PET PET
SHE'S VERY GOOD AT YABUSAME*, AND EVEN KYUDO**.
BUT SHE'S USUALLY VERY WELL-BEHAVED.
WHAT SHE DID WAS A BIT NAUGHTY...
YOU SAY I'M GOOD AT YABUSAME, SENPAI, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WON LAST YEAR!
PLEASE STOP THAT!
Ah!
Rebellious phase?!
BUT YOU WON'T WIN THIS YEAR!

UM...
YES, LET'S BOTH WORK HARD! ♡
GLARE
STOMP
STOMP
Mmrgh...


I HOPE YOU CAN MAKE HER TAKE THIS MORE SERIOUSLY.
FAREWELL.
I'M AFRAID YOU'LL BE *QUITE* DISAPPOINTED.
IF YOU'RE PLANNING ON CHEERING FOR SENPAI DURING THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION...
WHAT IS IT?
AH...!
HOW WAS THE KYUDO TOURNAMENT?

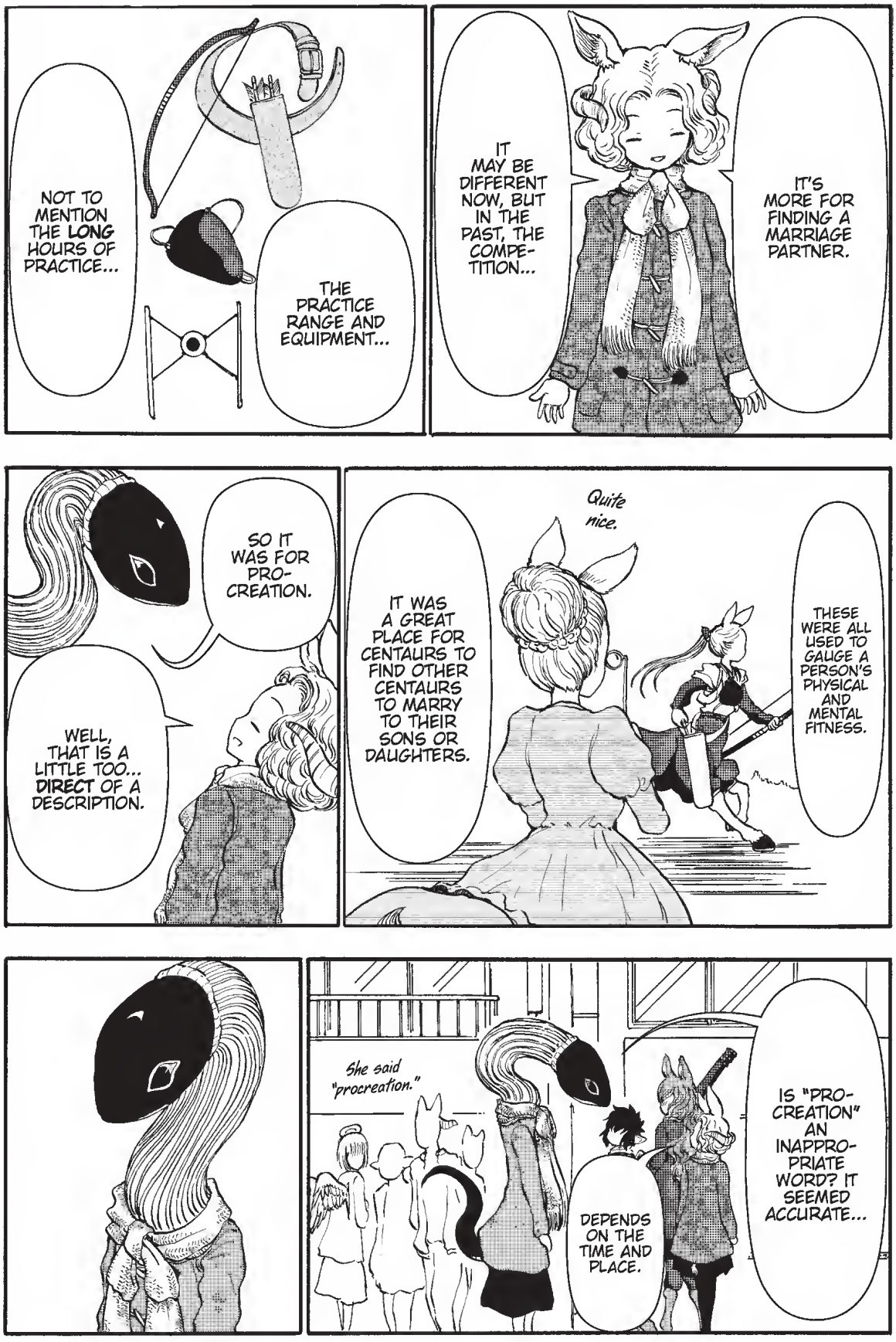
SO TO MAKE GOOD MEMORIES OF MY MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS...
I HAVE TO BEAT YOU AT YABUSAME, SENPAI!
POINT
We weren't even close in the team tournament.
I TOOK THIRD PLACE IN THE SINGLES TOURNAMENT AGAIN... NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR NATIONALS.
SHE'S A FEISTY ONE.
YEP...
JUST YOU WAIT!
CLIPPITY CLOP
CLIPPITY CLOP
THE COMPETITION BEFORE LAST DIDN'T GO WELL.
SHE MIGHT BE A LITTLE TOO SERIOUS ABOUT IT, THOUGH.

HEY, AYAKA-CHAN...
SO LAST YEAR, I TRIED SOME-THING TO HELP HER RELAX.
DID THAT HELP YOU RELAX?
BLAH~!
SMOOSH
Pfft?!
ARE YOU MOCKING ME?!

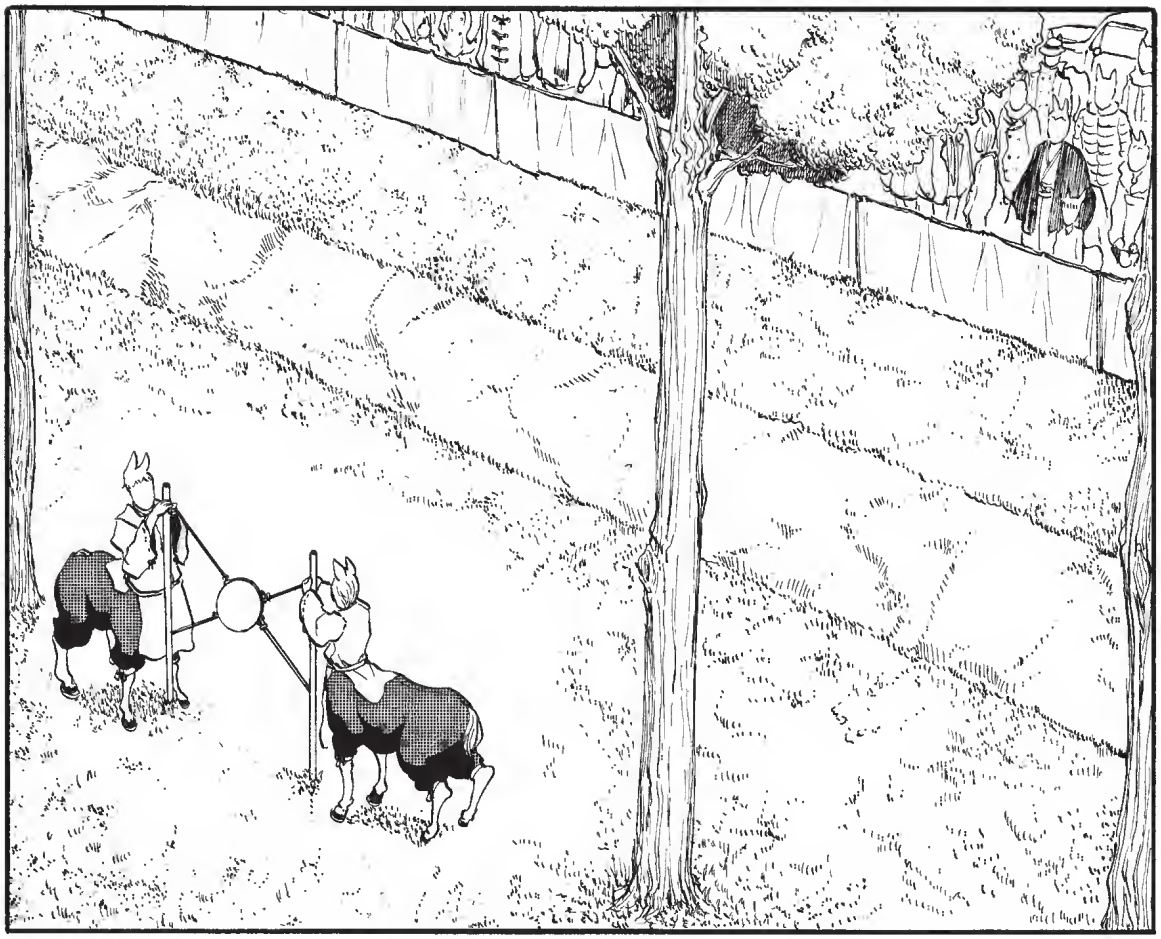
WOBBLE
FUME
FUME
Ah--!
Hee hee! Do it again! Do it again!
IT WORKS SO WELL WITH SHINO-CHAN.
SHE'S NOT A LITTLE KID.
NAH, IF SHE HATED YOU, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE TALKED TO YOU.
I THINK SHE HATES ME NOW.

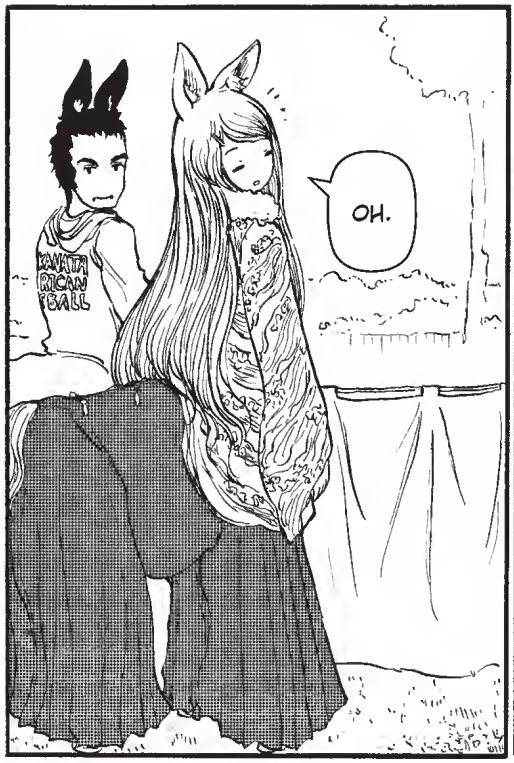
ACTUALLY, I THINK SHE LIKES YOU...
A LOT. I'LL TELL YOU A GOOD WAY TO HANDLE AYAKA-CHAN.
HEEEY.
DO YOU THINK THAT'LL BE OKAY?
IT'LL BE FINE. TRUST ME.
DO YOU GUYS WANT TO TRY KYUDO?
OKAY!
THAT'S ENOUGH GIRL TALK. GET BACK TO WORK.

USING A BOW IS A LOT HARDER THAN IT LOOKS.
ESPECIALLY JAPANESE BOWS.
BY THE WAY, WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO PICK UP ARCHERY, HIME-CHAN?
HUH?
MY MOTHER TOLD ME TO DO IT.
IF I DON'T, MY GRANDPA WILL COMPLAIN.

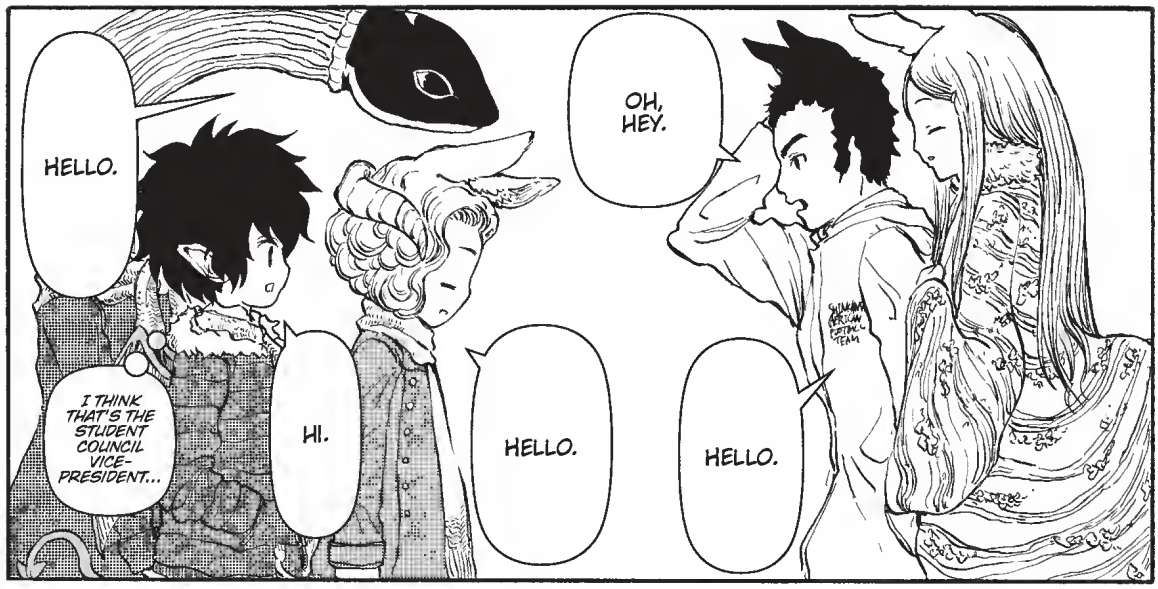

NOT TO MENTION THE LONG HOURS OF PRACTICE...
THE PRACTICE RANGE AND EQUIPMENT...
IT MAY BE DIFFERENT NOW, BUT IN THE PAST, THE COMPE-TITION...
IT'S MORE FOR FINDING A MARRIAGE PARTNER.
SO IT WAS FOR PRO-CREATION.
WELL, THAT IS A LITTLE TOO... DIRECT OF A DESCRIPTION.
Quite nice.
IT WAS A GREAT PLACE FOR CENTAURS TO FIND OTHER CENTAURS TO MARRY TO THEIR SONS OR DAUGHTERS.
THESE WERE ALL USED TO GAUGE A PERSON'S PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FITNESS.
She said "procreation."
DEPENDS ON THE TIME AND PLACE.
IS "PRO-CREATION" AN INAPPRO-PRIATE WORD? IT SEEMED ACCURATE...

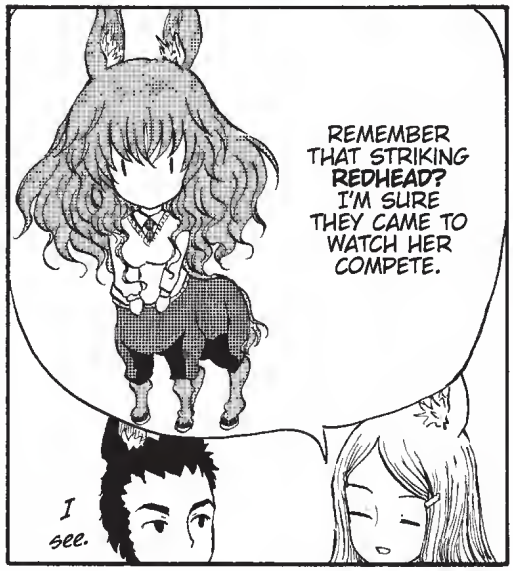
MAYBE YOU'LL GET MARRIED RIGHT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.
NO. NO... PROBABLY NOT.
This is the 21st century.
UM, I'M NOT DOING IT TO... PROCREATE.
Really.
SHE'S FROM A PRETTY HIGH-CLASS FAMILY.
BUT I WONDER ABOUT AYAKA-CHAN.
THERE ARE STILL FAMILIES THAT DO ARRANGED MARRIAGES, THOUGH.
WELL, SHE'S NOT REALLY OLD ENOUGH TO GET MARRIED YET.

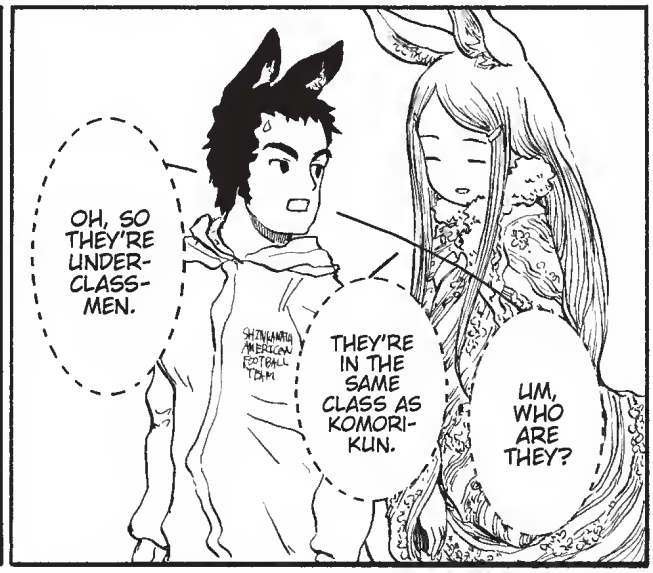


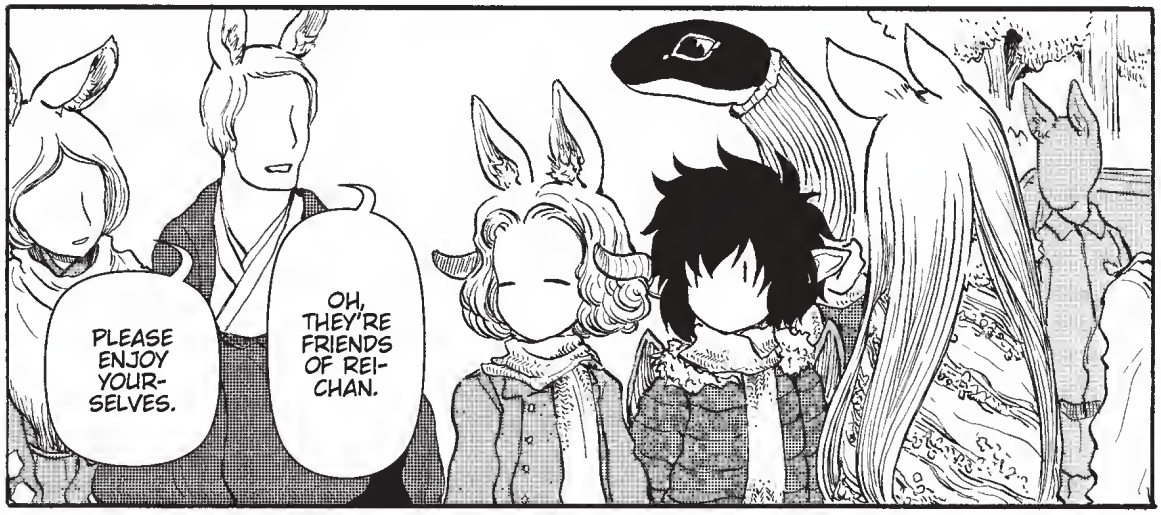

OH.

STARE
STARE
STARE
STARE
Snake-folk?!


HELLO.
I THINK THAT'S THE STUDENT COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT...
HI.
HELLO.
OH, HEY.
HELLO.

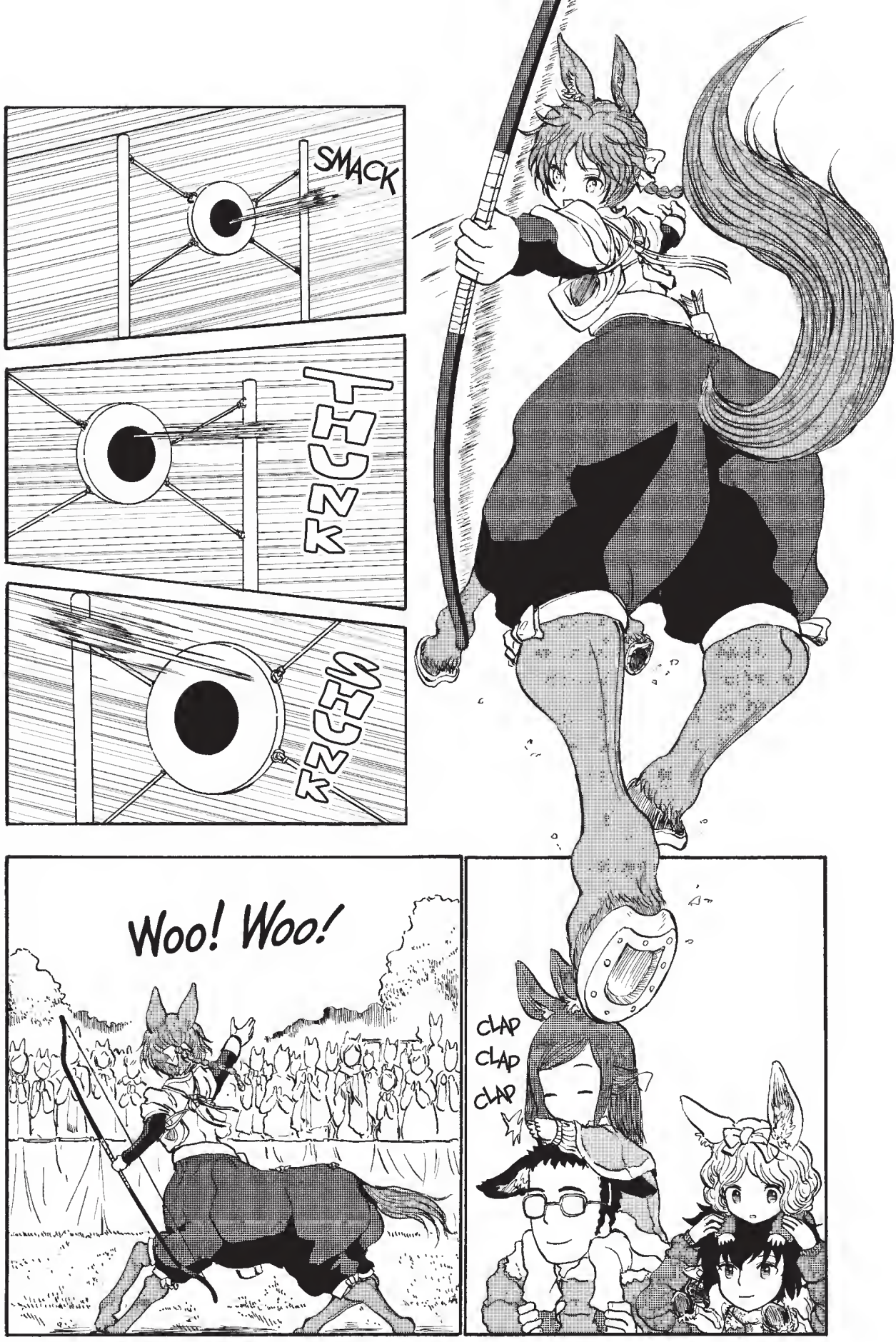

REMEMBER THAT STRIKING REDHEAD? I'M SURE THEY CAME TO WATCH HER COMPETE.
I see.

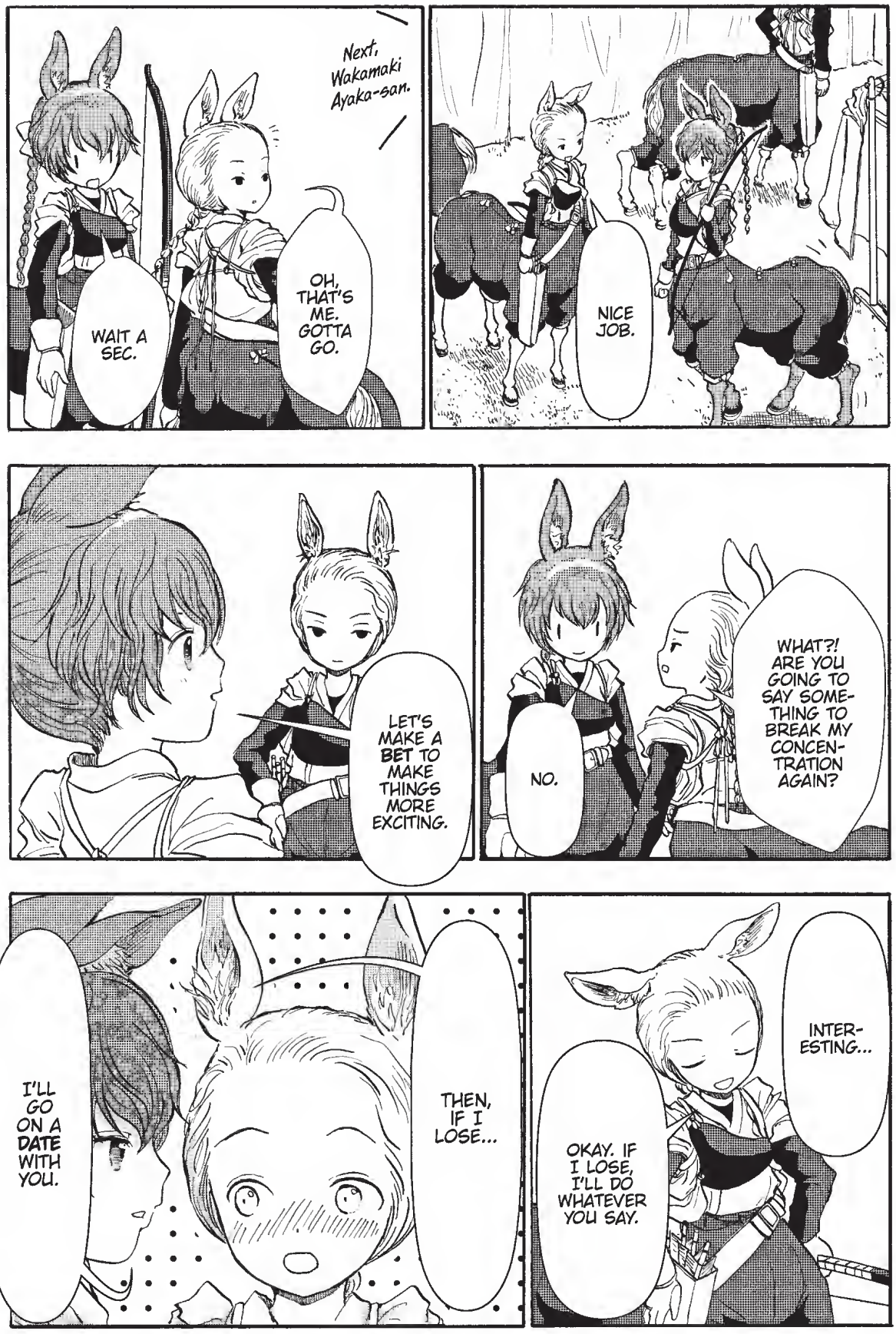

OH, SO THEY'RE UNDER-CLASS-MEN.
THEY'RE IN THE SAME CLASS AS KOMORI-KUN.
UM, WHO ARE THEY?

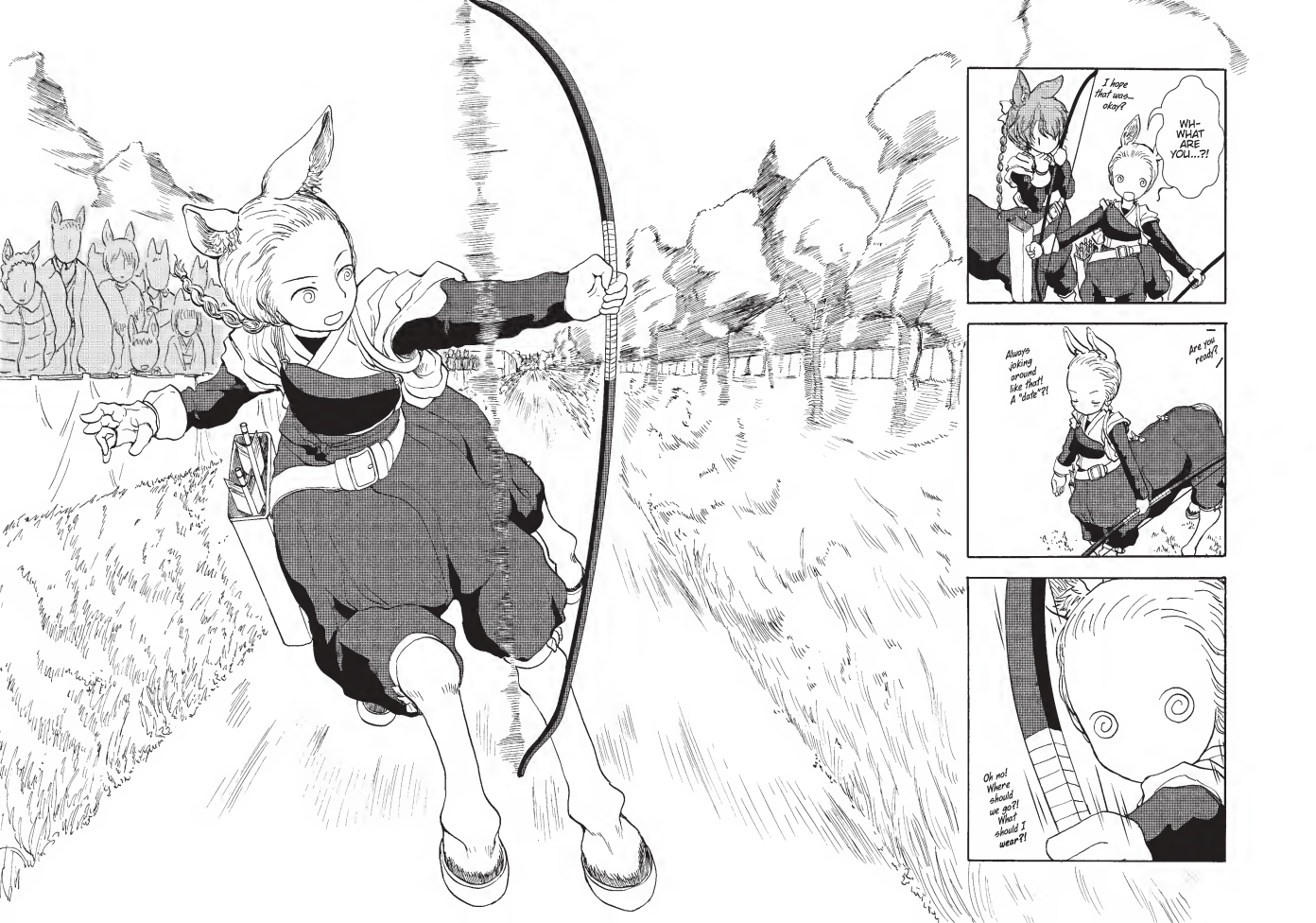

PLEASE ENJOY YOUR-SELVES.
OH, THEY'RE FRIENDS OF REI-CHAN.

Hey.
Hello ~!
Oh, hello.
What the heck...?
That was pretty normal.
NOZOMI-CHAN! KYO-CHAN! SUU-CHAN!
YOU LOOK SHARP TODAY.
HEE HEE.
Whoa, a snakefolk!
A dinosaur came?!

DO YOUR BEST~!
BIG SIS, GOOD LUCK!
All contestants, please report to your designated places.
WHOOPS, I GOTTA GO.
IT'S OKAY. BIG SIS IS RIGHT HERE.
The dinosaur is scary!
WE CAN ALL CHEER FOR HER TOGETHER, TODAY.
Mmgh!
No! We'll definitely take her--!
We won't take big sister Hime from you.
Come over here.
A GROWN MAN TALKING TO A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL?
WHY DON'T YOU GO TALK TO HER?
GO TALK TO HER FOR ME.


SMACK
THUNK
SHUNK
Woo! Woo!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP


Next, Wakamaki Ayaka-san.
WAIT A SEC.
OH, THAT'S ME. GOTTA GO.
NICE JOB.
LET'S MAKE A BET TO MAKE THINGS MORE EXCITING.
NO.
WHAT?! ARE YOU GOING TO SAY SOMETHING TO BREAK MY CONCENTRATION AGAIN?
I'LL GO ON A DATE WITH YOU.
THEN, IF I LOSE...
OKAY. IF I LOSE, I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU SAY.
INTERESTING...


I hope that was... okay?
WH-WHAT ARE YOU...?!
Always joking around like that! A "date"?!
Are you real?
Oh no! Where should we go?! What should I wear?!

SORRY!
YOU'RE LATE, SENPAI.
SINCE YOU LOST, SENPAI, PLEASE JUST FOLLOW ME.
UM, OKAY!
WE HAVE A LOT OF PLACES TO GO.
HUH?
Living and Fun
Ah!
WHY NOT?
WHY ARE WE SPYING, AGAIN?

A CentaUr's Life

# MESOZOIC CREATURES

## DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: IF DINOSAURS HADN'T GONE EXTINCT

IF DINOSAURS HADN'T GONE EXTINCT, WOULD MAMMALS EVER HAVE GONE ON TO PROSPER? THIS IS A TRICKY QUESTION. WHILE THE FOUR-SEASON CYCLE DID FIRST EMERGE DURING THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD, THE EARTH'S TEMPERATURE WAS STILL VERY HOT THROUGHOUT THE MESOZOIC ERA, PROVIDING A CLIMATE FOR WHICH THE DINOSAURS WERE VERY WELL SUITED.

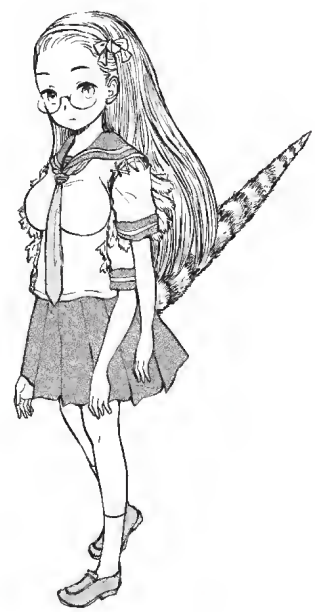
HOWEVER, THE EARTH IS A GREAT DEAL COOLER THAN IT WAS THEN, AND IT'S BEEN VISITED BY A NUMBER OF ICE AGES IN THE MEANTIME. IT'S LIKELY THEY WOULD HAVE GONE EXTINCT ANYWAY, UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE EARTH'S COOLING CLIMATE, OR ELSE VASTLY DECREASED IN NUMBER, ALLOWING MAMMALS TO FLOURISH. ALTERNATIVELY, THEY MIGHT HAVE ADAPTED TO THE COLD TEMPERATURES, THEREBY KEEPING MAMMALS SHOVED OFF INTO AN ECOLOGICAL NICHE FOR SMALL CREATURES. ONE CAN ALSO IMAGINE THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE EVOLVED INTO INTELLECTUAL LIFE FORMS A LA THE SNAKEFOLK AND MERFOLK AND COME TO COEXIST WITH HUMANKIND.

LET'S IMAGINE NOW WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE IF DINOSAURS HAD INDEED EVOLVED LIKE HUMANS RATHER THAN GOING EXTINCT.

### DINOSAURFOLK

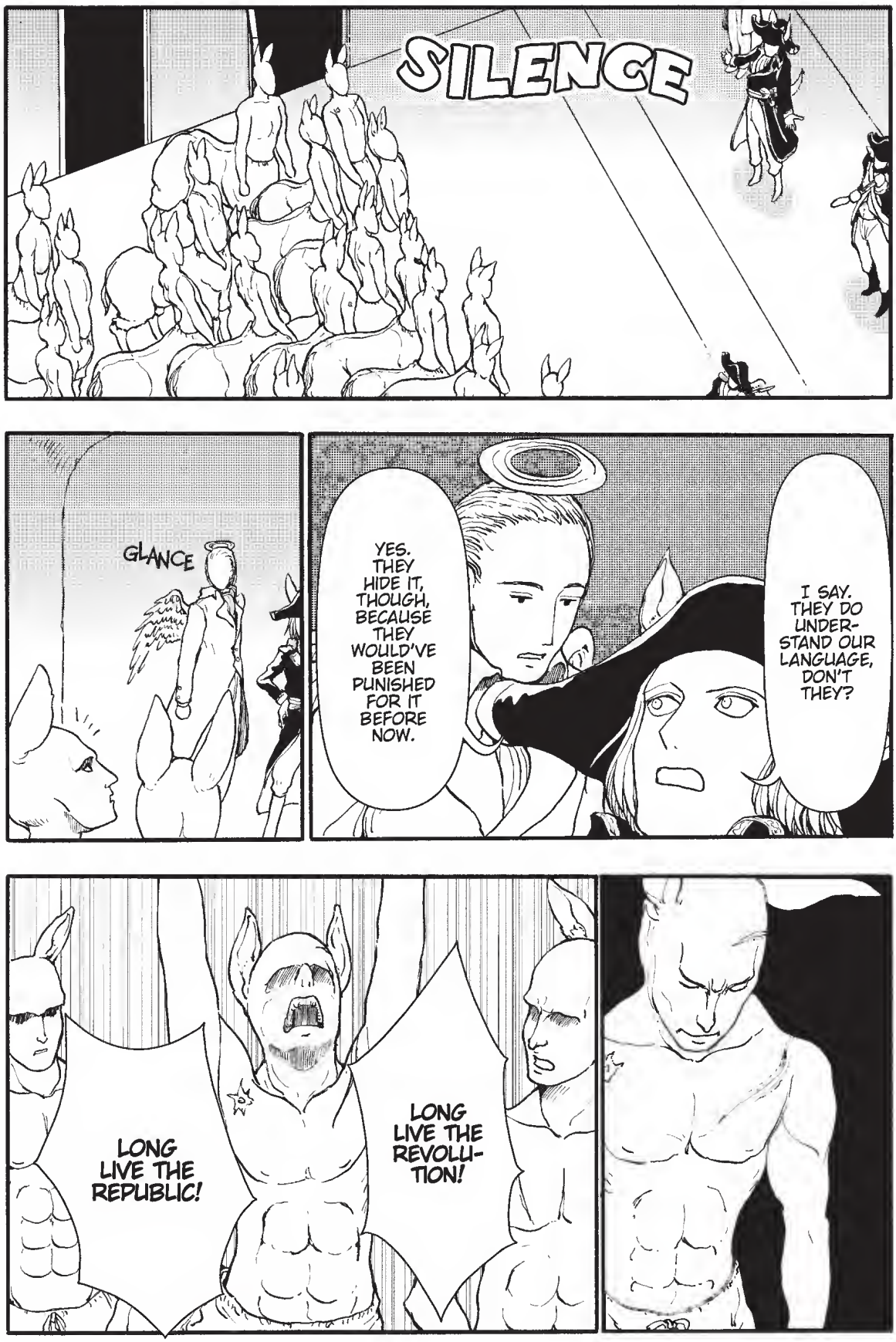
A WIDELY POPULAR MODEL USED BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF THE ANTARCTICAN SNAKEFOLK. IT SHOWS THE THEORY THAT, JUST AS THE REPTILIAN ICHTHYOSAURS HAD EVOLVED TO RESEMBLE FISH SPECIES AND DOLPHINS, SO TOO COULD SPECIES HAVE COME TO RESEMBLE HUMAN BEINGS IF THEY WERE TO EVOLVE IN SIMILAR WAYS. NOTABLY, THIS MODEL, DEPICTING THE FIGURE OF A YOUNG, FOUR-ARMED GIRL, IS THE ONLY ONE ON DISPLAY AT THE SHIMODA JAPAN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM. WHILE A BROADER VARIETY OF FIGURES--MALE AND FEMALE, YOUNG AND OLD--HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PLANNED, A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION RESULTED IN THE PROJECT'S FUNDING BEING PULLED. ONLY THIS FIGURE, WHICH WAS ALREADY IN PRODUCTION, WAS SEEN TO COMPLETION--ALBEIT AT THE PROJECT SUPERVISOR'S OWN PERSONAL EXPENSE.

FURTHERMORE, THE FIGURE WAS ORIGINALLY DISPLAYED IN THE NUDE, BUT DUE TO THE REGRETTABLE HUMAN INABILITY TO MAINTAIN SCHOLARLY COMPOSURE, THE PROJECT SUPERVISOR AND CREATOR DECIDED TO ADORN IT WITH CLOTHES FROM HIS HOME. DUE TO THESE EVENTS, THERE HAVE BEEN SCATTERED ALLEGATIONS ON THE NET THAT THE CREATOR PROJECTED HIS OWN PERSONAL TASTES ONTO THE MODEL, BUT THESE CLAIMS ARE COMPLETELY GROUNDLESS.

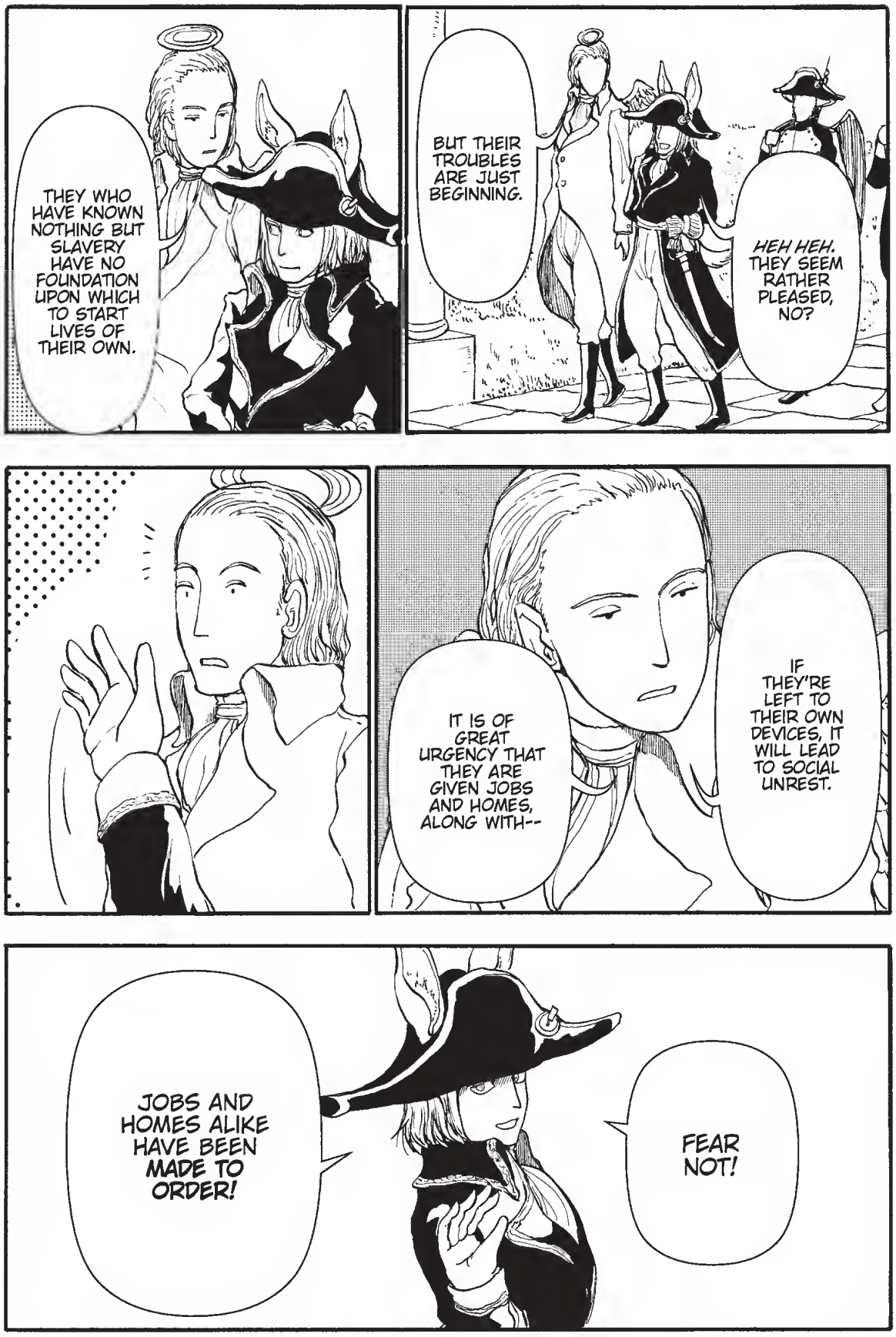


CHAPTER 29

CENTAURS!
YOU ARE NO LONGER SLAVES! YOU HAVE BEEN FREED!
I DECLARE, IN THE NAME OF CONSUL BONAPARTE AND THE NEW ORDER:
YOU ARE HEREBY FREE AND EQUAL CITIZENS OF THIS REPUBLIC!


SILENCE
GLANCE
I SAY. THEY DO UNDER-STAND OUR LANGUAGE, DON'T THEY?
YES. THEY HIDE IT, THOUGH, BECAUSE THEY WOULD'VE BEEN PUNISHED FOR IT BEFORE NOW.
LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC!
LONG LIVE THE REVOLU-TION!

YOU ARE INDEED!
ARE WE TRULY FREED?
LONG LIVE EQUAL-ITY!
LONG LIVE FREE-DOM!
HURRAH
VIVE!!
LONG LIVE BONAPARTE!
LONG LIVE FREEDOM!


THEY WHO HAVE KNOWN NOTHING BUT SLAVERY HAVE NO FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO START LIVES OF THEIR OWN.
BUT THEIR TROUBLES ARE JUST BEGINNING.
HEH HEH. THEY SEEM RATHER PLEASED, NO?
IT IS OF GREAT URGENCY THAT THEY ARE GIVEN JOBS AND HOMES, ALONG WITH--
IF THEY'RE LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES, IT WILL LEAD TO SOCIAL UNREST.
JOBS AND HOMES ALIKE HAVE BEEN MADE TO ORDER!
FEAR NOT!

KA-BOOM
KA-BOOM
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
KRAKOW
KRAKOW
KA-BOOM
ROAAARRR
KRAKOW
K-SHNK
K-SHNK

MEN!
FA-BOOM
YES, THE VERY REPUBLIC WHICH BROUGHT YOU LIBERTY AND EQUALITY!
CALAMITY ENCROACHES UPON OUR FATHER-LAND!

SHMP
IT NOW STANDS TO BE TRAMPED DOWN BY THE VERY MONARCHS, NOBLES, AND KNAVES WHO ONCE OPPRESSED YOU!
KA-BOOM
KAPOW
KAPOW
FIGHT! TO PROTECT YOUR LIBERTY AND EQUALITY!
CLIPPITY
CLOP
CLIPPITY
CLOP
ドカカカカ

BANG
BANG
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL

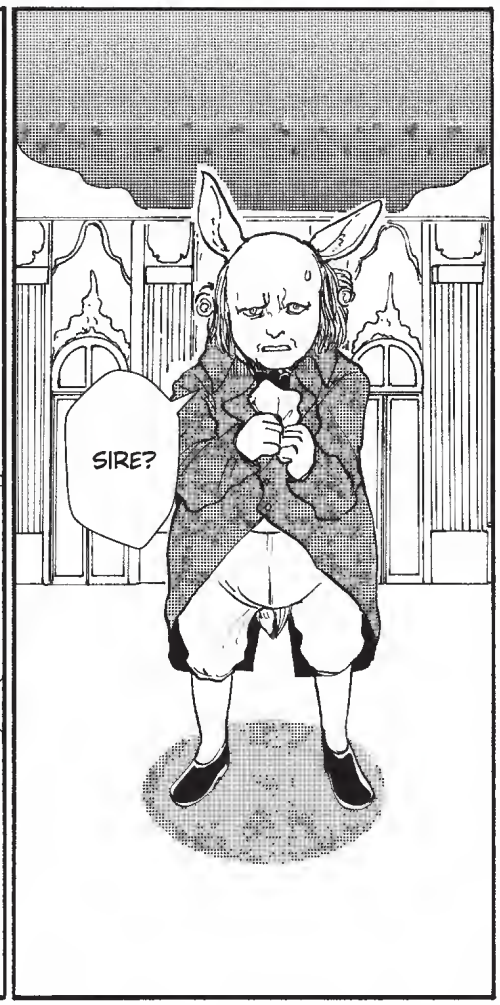
KILL THE FOES OF OUR FATHERLAND!
KILL THEM!
KILL THOSE WHO STAND AGAINST FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND BROTHER-HOOD!

CHARGE THROUGH THEM!
TMP
WARGH !!
WE'RE NO MATCH!
CHAK
PAINT OUR NATION WITH THE ENEMY'S BLOOD!
CLOP
CLOP
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL

THIS WON'T DO.
RETREAT!
FWUMP
FLIP
WAH ?!

CRUNCH
WHAT DO YOU--
BANG
BANG
HOW DARE YOU?!
WE'VE WON.

SEEK OUT ANY CENTAUR SLAVES WHO ARE CAPABLE OF UNDER-STANDING SPEECH.


SIRE?

THEY'RE AT RISK OF GETTING RILED UP BY FOREIGN REVOLUTIONARIES AND REVOLTING.
KILL THEM.
AND ONCE FOUND, SIRE?
WE'VE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY RAISING AND CARING FOR THEM.
S-SIRE, SURELY WE NEEDN'T KILL THEM...
THEY MERELY HIDE IT TO AVOID PUNISH-MENT.
NEARLY ALL CENTAURS UNDERSTAND SPEECH.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU HAVE TO KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM! DO IT!
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT!
IF WE SIMPLY OFFERED THEM A BIT BETTER FOOD AND BEDS TO SLEEP IN--

EEP!
PLEASE, NO...!
COME. STAND UP.
I KNOW YOU DID ALL WITHIN YOUR POWER TO HELP US.
WE ARE HUMAN TOO.

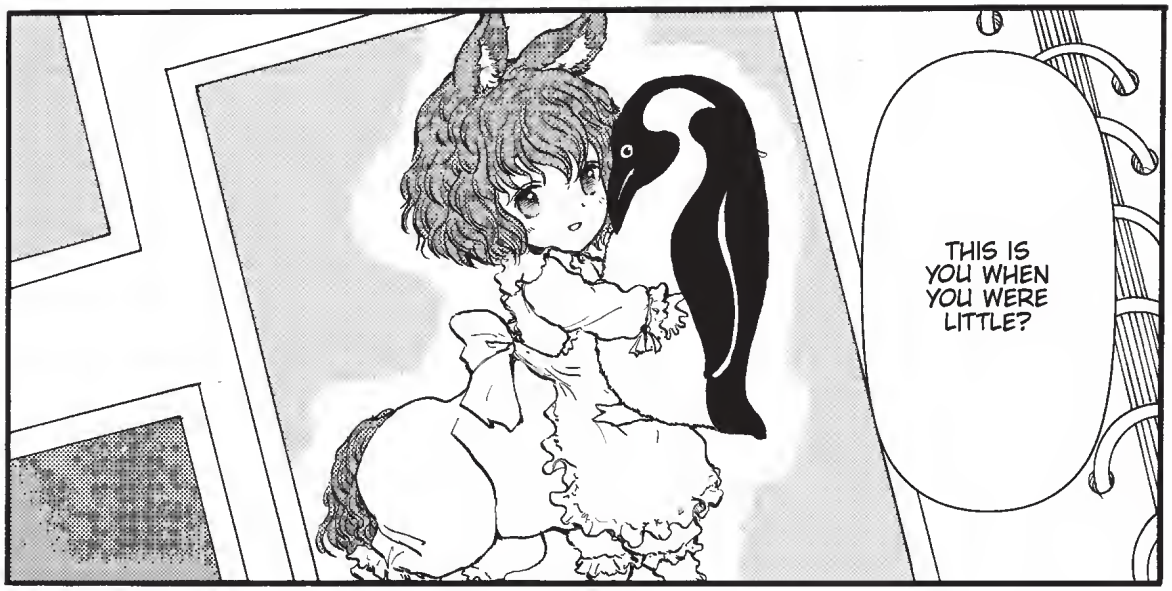
LIBERATING THE CENTAURS IS *OUT OF THE QUESTION!*
SO WHAT IF THEY ARE FILTHY?
LOOK AT THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION.
WE'RE NOT SOME BACKWARD COUNTRY! YOU'RE SUGGESTING WE TREAT THOSE *FILTHY CENTAURS* LIKE *HUMAN BEINGS?!*
CENTAUR SLAVES IN EVERY REGION ARE RISING UP IN REBELLION.
BONAPARTE'S CENTAUR ARMIES ARE SWEEPING ACROSS THE ENTIRE CONTINENT UNRIVALED.

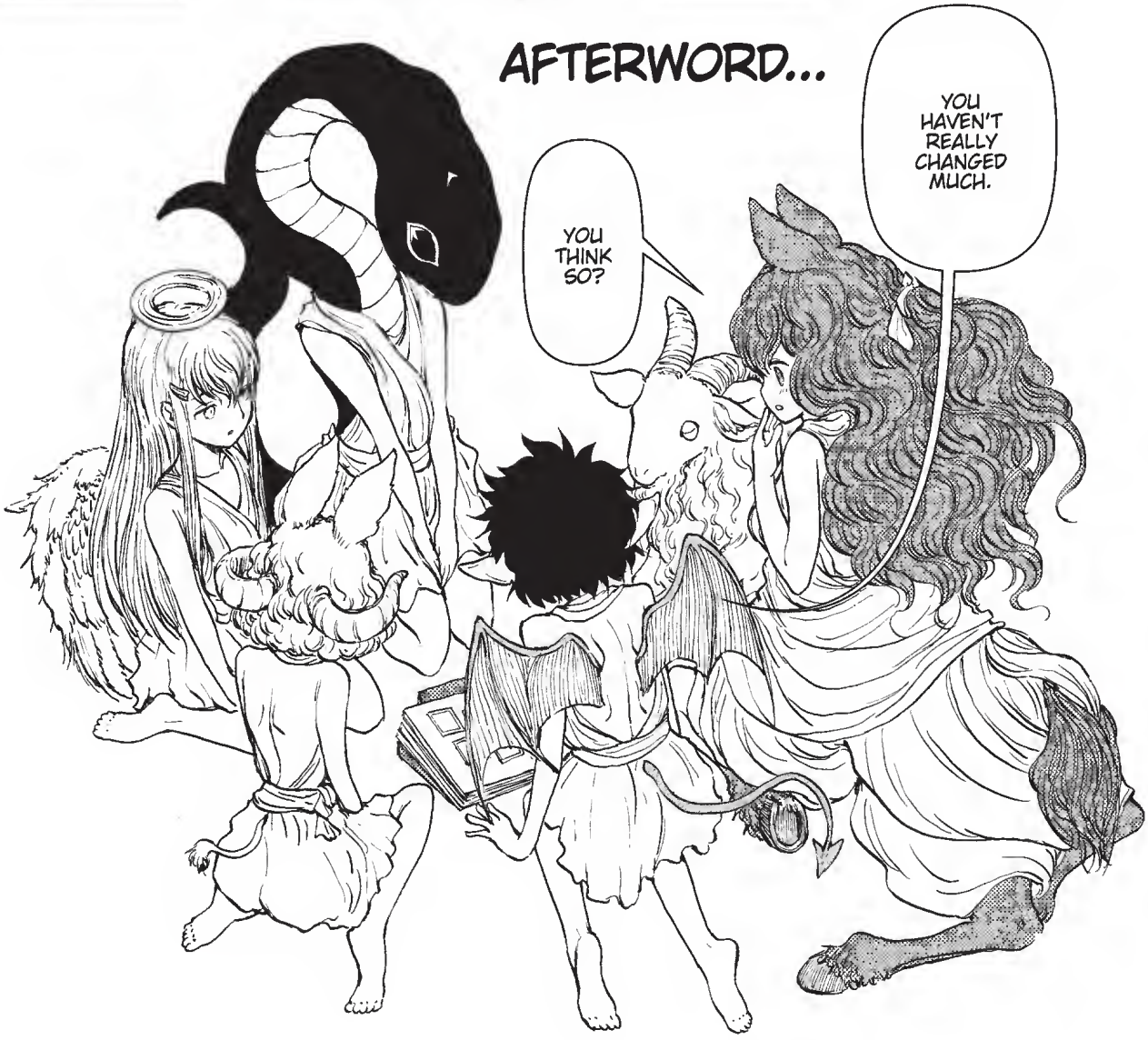
WE HAVE DOMINANT FLEETS AND BRILLIANT ADMIRALS ON OUR SIDE!
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY INVADE THIS NATION AS WELL.
WE'LL SIMPLY SLAUGHTER ALL CENTAURS IN THE NATION!
THAT MAY PREVENT AN OUTSIDE INVASION, BUT WHAT ABOUT ONE FROM WITHIN?
AND I TRUST THAT LITTLE MAN BONAPARTE WILL OFFER THE REBELS PLENTY OF SUPPORT.
THAT WOULD MERELY FORCE THEM TO REVOLT.
UTTER FOOLISHNESS.

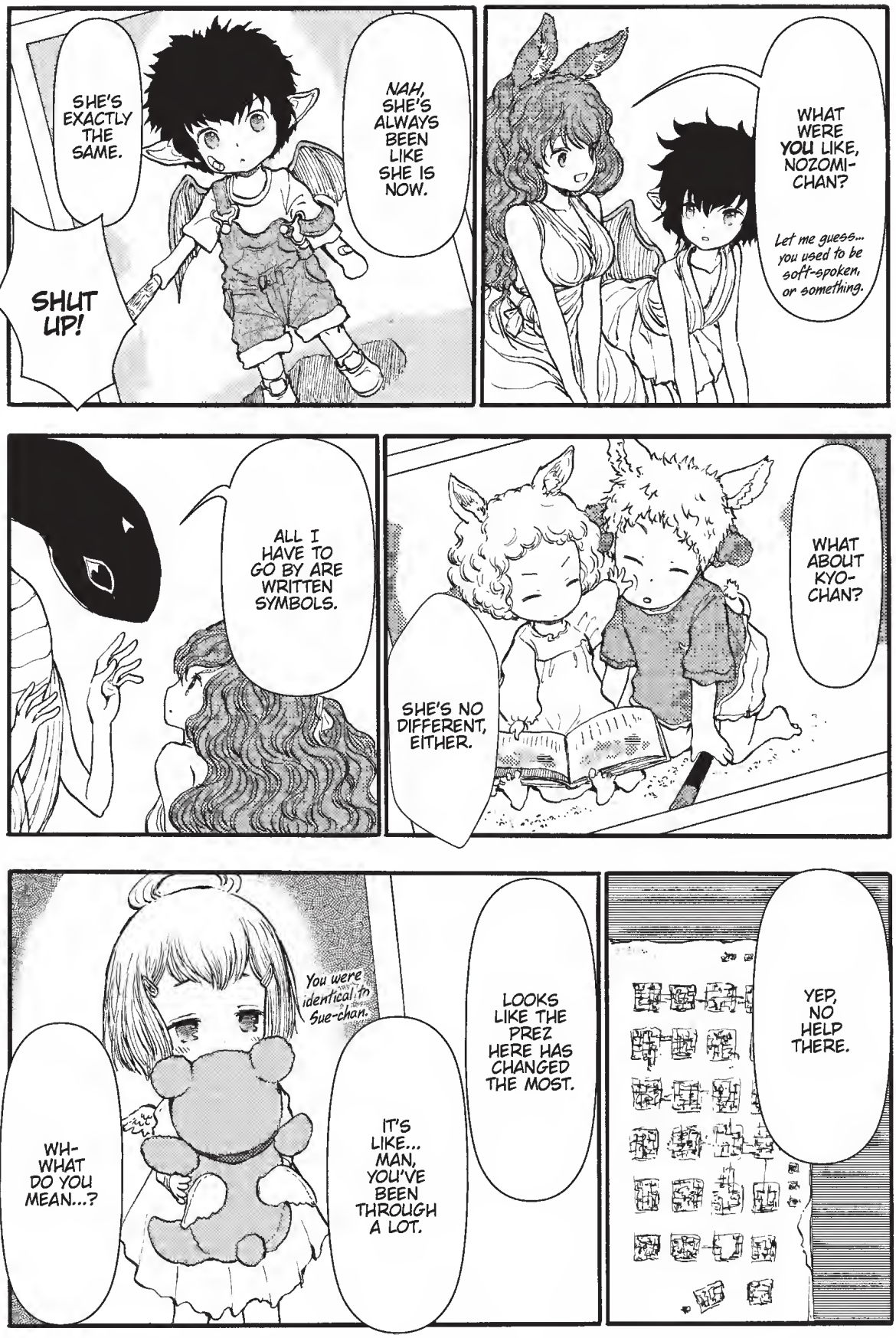
GULP
IT'D BE NO SURPRISE IF WE WOUND UP WITH OUR HEADS NEXT TO OUR KING'S, ALL LINED UP IN FRONT OF HIM!
HOWEVER, IF WE INSTEAD LIBERATE THE NATION'S CENTAURS PREEMPTIVELY,
THEY SHALL BECOME A POWERFUL WEAPON WE CAN USE TO **STRIKE BACK** AT BONAPARTE.
*HA!* IT SEEMS THE POMPOUS ASSES HAVE FINALLY GRASPED THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION.
*HM.* WE SHALL FIND OURSELVES QUITE BUSY SOON ENOUGH.
I WANT YOU TO BRING TOGETHER YOUR COMPATRIOTS.
YES, MY LORD.

ANYTHING INTERESTING IN THE NEWS?
MORE WARRING BETWEEN SPECIES IN THE BAGARA KINGDOM.
INDEED.
UTTER BARBARIANS.

A CentaUr's Life


THIS IS YOU WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE?


AFTERWORD...
YOU HAVEN'T REALLY CHANGED MUCH.
YOU THINK SO?


WHAT WERE YOU LIKE, NOZOMI-CHAN?
Let me guess... you used to be soft-spoken, or something.
NAH, SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN LIKE SHE IS NOW.
SHE'S EXACTLY THE SAME.
SHUT UP!
WHAT ABOUT KYO-CHAN?
SHE'S NO DIFFERENT, EITHER.
ALL I HAVE TO GO BY ARE WRITTEN SYMBOLS.
YEP, NO HELP THERE.
LOOKS LIKE THE PREZ HERE HAS CHANGED THE MOST.
IT'S LIKE... MAN, YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT.
You were identical to Sue-chan.
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?

# THE GROWTH OF KANATA THROUGH INDUSTRY AND WATER TRANSPORTATION

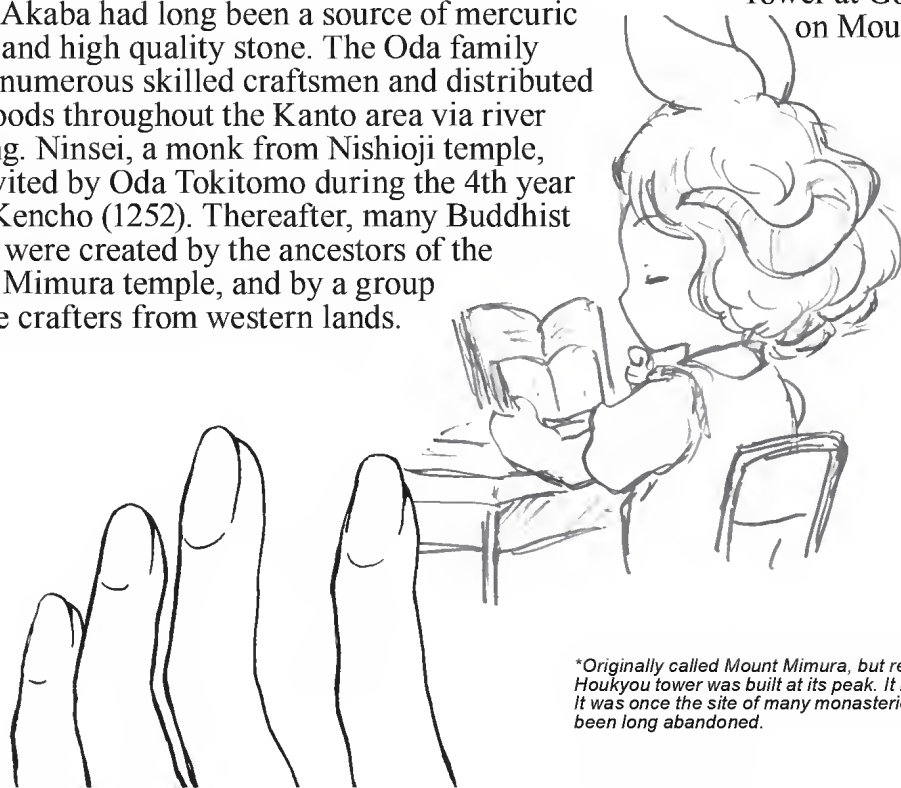
During the Kamikura and Muromachi eras, the Oda family made Oda castle (the Oda district in modern Kanata City) the seat of government power. Oda castle was built on tableland between Mount Houkyou* and the wetlands nearby that have become rice fields in modern times. This location was not considered militarily strategic, unlike the locations of other castles. So why would the Oda family, governors of the Hidachi prefecture, choose such a place?

The answer is that the castle was adjacent to the Sanzuse River (also known as the Ake River). This river not only opened to a large inland sea, called the Katori Sea, but to the rest of the nation for water transport and shipping. The Katori Sea runs between what is currently Kasumigaura and Teganuma/Inbanuma, connecting them together. It serves as a junction for several smaller rivers--for instance, you can reach the bay of the Imperial City through the old Tonegawa water system.

During these eras, centaurs were still used as the primary form of transportation. River traffic, however, allowed for the movement of troops and supplies in greater volumes, thus cementing its place as a lifeline for the leaders of the time.

Mount Akaba had long been a source of mercuric sulfide and high quality stone. The Oda family hosted numerous skilled craftsmen and distributed their goods throughout the Kanto area via river shipping. Ninsei, a monk from Nishioji temple, was invited by Oda Tokitomo during the 4th year of the Kencho (1252). Thereafter, many Buddhist statues were created by the ancestors of the nearby Mimura temple, and by a group of stone crafters from western lands.

Remains of a Five Ringed Tower at Gokuraku Temple on Mount Houkyou



*Originally called Mount Mimura, but renamed Mount Houkyou after the Houkyou tower was built at its peak. It is also locally called Mount Oda. It was once the site of many monasteries and convents, but most have been long abandoned.*

# THE CONFLICT AND TENSION BETWEEN THE HOUJOU FAMILY'S INFLUENCE AND HIDACHI'S GOVERNOR

After the death of En no Yoritomo and the establishment of the Kamikura shogunate,
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Yada no Tomoie (ancestor of the Oda family--his son Tomoshige changed the family name back to Oda) was one of the thirteen council members that assisted the second generation shogun, Yoriie, to govern the shogunate.

The governorship of Hidachi had been passed down within the Oda family for generations, but the Houjou family received that power after the shogun line of the En family ended in just three generations. During the Rebellion of Shokyu between the Kamikura shogunate and the Emperor Gouba, the Houjou family not only survived the Mongol attack, but eliminated powerful families of the shogunate, such as Miura and Adachi Yasumori, gaining power that even affected Hidachi. Thus, during the first year of Bunpo (1317), the governor's seat was given not to a member of the Oda family, but to Sasuke no Tokitsuna, a member of the Houjou family.

Here, we will explain a little of the Kamikura shogunate. It is often misunderstood, but the establishment of the Kamikura shogunate did not mean that the preexisting government and aristocracy were destroyed in a single night. The provincial governors and Kokuga** of various provinces coexisted for quite some time. The Kamikura Bakufu held two important administrative duties. First of all, it could appoint *Jito,* or lords, responsible for operating the manors peppered across the land. Secondly, it presided over the governors in each state responsible for oversight of the military, police, and the aforementioned regional *Jito.* Their authority initially only extended to vassals (military retainers to the Bakufu) in the eastern region. At first, the Bakufu's influence was limited only to governance of the samurai in the east. However, as a result of the Bakufu's victory in the Joukyuu Rebellion, their advantage over the imperial court became solidified, and their influence spread westward as they commanded a defense against the Mongols. Meanwhile, the *Jito* and governors began exercising their newfound authority to seize manors, Kokuga land, and power.

Toward the end of the Kamikura period, the Houjou family began to occupy a greater and greater percentage of the nation's governor posts. This monopolization of power aroused unrest from other vassals, ultimately leading to the downfall of the Houjou, and indeed, the end of the Kamikura Bakufu.

***In the case of Jito, they would intentionally withhold annual tribute to Kokuga and manor stewards, then as a "solution" agree to pay a fraction of the owed tribute and oversee a section of the land at their expense, thereby acquiring portions of these manors and Kokuga estates and gradually usurping influence from the imperial court and aristocracy. Meanwhile, governors were to able to extend military influence beyond their true means by reappointing Jito and Kokuga to the lowly bureaucratic post of hikan.*

A CentaUr's Life

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Even though Hime and her friends live in an enlightened era where equality among all sentient creatures rules the day, there are harsh reminders that things weren't always this way. As the girls struggle with their plans for the future, Shino-chan learns an important lesson about empathy for a creature smaller than herself. *A Centaur's Life* continues!

OLDER TEEN (16+)

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